

(2) 296

R E M A R K S
ON THE
S L A V E T R A D E,
AND THE
vide SLAVERY of the NEGROES.
IN A
S E R I E S O F L E T T E R S.

Ibi Fas, ubi plurima Merces.

Africanus, pseudon.

Quand on ne se sert de la Navigation que pour piller des vaisseaux et transporter des Esclaves, elle n'est plus evidemment qu'un moyen affreux d'augmenter le nombre des calamités de la Nature Humaine.

Reflexions sur la Navigation, par le Docteur B. FRANKLIN.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. PHILLIPS, GEORGE-YARD, LOMBARD-STREET; AND SOLD ALSO BY T. PAYNE AND SONS, MEUSE-GATE, CHARING-CROSS; AND CHASE AND CO. NORWICH.

MDCCLXXXVIII.

R E M A R K S

S L A V E T R A D E

S L A V E R Y O F T H E N E G R O E S

S E R I E S O F L E T T E R S

TO GRENVILLE SHARP, Esq. Chairman of the
Committee of the Society, instituted in London in
the Year 1787, for the purpose of effecting the
abolition of the Slave-Trade.

S I R,

EVERY friend to freedom and humanity has beheld, with warm approbation, the progress of your benevolence. We see, Sir, with pleasure, that he who first claimed the impartial protection of the British laws for Somerset, and proved the mischiefs arising from the want of such protection in the case of Collingwood, now stands foremost in the general cause of justice and of freedom: we catch the noble spirit we admire; and the persevering benevolence of Mr. Sharp becomes a subject of emulous imitation, as well as of unbounded praise: the free and generous spirit of Englishmen is now strongly marking its abhorrence of the African Slave-Trade, in general Petitions to Parliament for its abolition.

Permit me, Sir, to dedicate to you these Letters to which your present undertaking has given birth: it has been the principal object of them to promote the success of that glorious cause in which you are so worthily embarked.

I am, S I R,

With great Respect,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

AFRICANUS.

To GERRIT SMITH, Esq. Chairman of the
Committee of the Society, instituted in London in
the Year 1787, for the purpose of effecting the
Abolition of the Slave-Trade.

THE profits which may arise from the sale of these Re-
marks, will be appropriated to the use of the SOCIETY insti-
tuted in London 1787, for the purpose of effecting the Abo-
lition of the SLAVE TRADE.

With great Respect,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

AFRICANUS.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

SIR,

IT is the great happiness of an Englishman, that he has free liberty of thought and speech upon all occasions; and that so long as he does not aim at disturbing the public tranquillity, or aspersing the characters of individuals, the press is open to his observations on any subject on which he wishes to engage the public attention. A prudent man will not, however, without previous consideration, obtrude himself officiously upon it, nor rashly venture to call it forth on occasions which may be unworthy of its notice: but if there should exist in the community at large an Evil, which opposes, in its principle and in its practice, the great law of nature, and the dearest rights of man; an Evil, which needs only to be made known to be condemned; surely it will not be thought without good reason that an individual submits an impartial account of it to the attention of the public.

The intercourse between several parts of England and the West-India Islands, being not frequent nor direct, the peculiar circumstances which attend one branch of the Trade to those Islands may reasonably be supposed not generally known, nor understood; and as this particular branch of Trade is the very evil alluded to, I shall not consider myself as labouring in vain, (whatever be the event) by candidly investigating the ORIGIN, PROGRESS, and PRESENT STATE of the AFRICAN and WEST-INDIAN SLAVE TRADE.

It is a well known principle in human nature, that we are less solicitous about distant evils of great magnitude, than about domestic ones of comparatively small account: the mind of man does not readily give credit to the existence of misfortunes of which it has not seen instances; nor easily sympathize with sufferings, which accord not in some degree with its own sense

of what sufferings are. Having, happily, no instances of Slavery in our own country, we are not caught by examples of the misery which Slaves are made to endure; we are not roused by severities which are inflicted on them without remorse. As the death of thousands in battle is often read of almost without concern, so the cruelties of the Slave Trade from Africa to the West-Indies has been talked of (though we hope it will be so no longer) with an indifference, common to other commercial considerations. A cargo of slaves, like a cargo of lumber, may have foundered at sea without exciting a sigh, if it were but insured; or if it arrived at its destined port, the condemnation of thousands of Human Beings, to the rank and labour of brutes, without any prospect of release, may have been considered as a consequence of state policy, and justified by the plea of commercial necessity; but such justification and such policy are gradually giving way, I trust, to the more authentic proofs, from experience, that Slavery is capable of regulations, more agreeable to the liberal sentiments of a civilized people; and at the same time, not less advantageous to the general and particular interests of the West-India Colonies.

I shall enter no further into the motives for taking up the subject in the light in which it is proposed to take it up, than merely to observe, that it is not meant to deny the necessity for *Servitude*, but to remedy the cruelties and consequent miseries of *Slavery*; and to hold forth to the attention of the public, good reasons for concluding, that the SLAVE TRADE is Impolitic as well as Unjust;—that equal advantages may, with more certainty, arise to their masters from the labour of Slaves differently treated from what they are at present; and that humanity and commercial benefits are not such irreconcilable principles as are commonly imagined.

As the letters, Sir, which I thus take the liberty of addressing to you, will in a great measure be historical, they will I trust on this account be not altogether unentertaining; more especially as you may be assured that I will “nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice;” and that as I entertain too high a respect for the good sense of those to whom I address myself through your means, to attempt imposing upon their understandings, I have
too

too much regard to the sacred name of truth to let any thing short of it fall from the pen of, Sir, your most obedient,

AFRICANUS.

LETTER THE SECOND.

S I R,

IN pursuance of the design, pointed out in my introductory letter, of giving to the public the History of the SLAVE TRADE in its original, its progressive, and its present state, you will permit me to dedicate this letter, and perhaps the next, to the first of those situations.

“ In speaking of Africa, there are prejudices to be combated which do not exist against the people of any other continent. The piratical states of Barbary on the north, the Negroes on the west, and the Hottentots on the south, impress the minds of Europeans with abhorrence and contempt—they are considered as deserving no regard, and as entitled to no pity. The exception of the once flourishing kingdom of Egypt is almost forgotten, and its past glories are obscured in its present servitude. While men are therefore disposed to judge under the influence of this prejudice, they will be less concerned at the recital of acts of cruelty and injustice towards Africans than they would at a similar conduct towards any other people—they will feel careless about remedying evils of which Negroes only complain, and by which Negroes only perish. To assist in removing this prejudice, it may be proper to give you, Sir, a short but accurate account of

the situation, trade, condition, and skill, of that part of the western coasts of Africa which has furnished Slaves among other commodities of Traffic; and in which so many millions of its Inhabitants have been sacrificed to the interest of merchants and planters, divided from them, not by mountains or rivers alone, but by the Atlantic ocean. This review will shew you, that though the populousness of a country has ever been considered as one great source of its happiness and strength, yet in this instance, by being made itself an article of merchandize, it has become its greatest bane; and that from the wars which this infamous traffic has occasioned, and the treachery by which it continues to be supported, we receive a melancholy proof, that the best means of wealth may, through the avarice of men, be made the surest means of destruction.

Only cast your eye for a moment over a map of Africa, and you will easily discern what a range of country is subject to this traffic of the Human Species—begin at the river Senegal, and proceed southward till you come to the Gambia; pass onward through the Grain coast, the Ivory coast, and the Slave coast, (which has acquired its name from this traffic)—trace over the kingdoms of Benin, and so down to Congo and the southernmost parts of Angola and Benguela, where the slave trade ends; and then reflect that a range of no less than three thousand five hundred miles is subject to this unnatural merchandize! that Commerce which enriches other countries, impoverishes these; because in these, Mankind itself is the Commodity which is to be obtained at all events; and, because in these alone is Slavery become the *cause of War, and not War, as is commonly, but falsely asserted, the cause of Slavery.

From the various accounts which Moore, Bosman, Brue, Adanson, and others, have given of these western kingdoms of Africa, after having not merely visited them, but resided, some in public capacities, for years in different parts of them, it appears that the coast of Guinea is well peopled and well cultivated; that it supplies the necessary comforts of life to its inhabitants,

* The Europeans, says De Brue, are far from desiring to act as Peace-makers amongst the Negroes, which would be acting against their own interests, since the greater the Wars the more Slaves are procured. Col. Vol. ii. p. 28.

with

with little toil and solicitude; that though the climate is extremely unhealthy to Europeans, thousands of whom are continually perishing there by it, yet that it agrees perfectly well with the native Negroes, who are seldom troubled with the distempers arising from the unhealthy air, which destroys Foreigners in such numbers; that they have established forms of government, and are civilized in many respects more than could have been imagined; that their internal wars with each other are not so common, nor so cruel in their conduct, as they have been represented to be; that many Negroe nations are situated up the shores of the rivers Senegal and Gambia (the former of which is navigable near 1000 and the latter 600 miles up the country); that they are very hospitable, carry on a trade with the inland nations, are very populous, their women being very fruitful, and that they suffer not any persons but those who are guilty of crimes to be made slaves.†—Among the Fulis, who inhabit the country on both sides of the Senegal, Francis Moore asserts, among other regulations, that if any of their people are known to be made slaves, all the Fulis will join to redeem them. These northern Negroes also practise several trades, as smiths, potters, saddlers, and weavers—which is an indisputable proof, that society has long since made some considerable progress among them: and would probably have made more, if it had not been checked by the Slave Trade.

The Grain and Ivory Coasts, extending about five hundred miles, are variously represented by different people; but the best received opinion is, that though the inhabitants are naturally kind to strangers, and fond of trading with them, yet the frequent injuries they have received from Europeans have made them * suspicious and shy—have made them prone to retort upon New Comers the ill-treatment which they have received from the Old Adventurers. As the Europeans have no Settlement in this part of Guinea, Trade is carried on by signals from the ships; on the appearance

† The Gambians abhor Slavery, and will attempt any thing, though never so desperate, to avoid it. W. Smith, p. 28. Voyage to Guinea.

* As we pass along this coast we very often lay before a town, and fired a gun for the natives to come off, but no soul came near us; at length we learnt by some ships that were trading down the coast, that the Natives seldom came on board an English ship for fear of being detained or carried off. W. Smith, p. 111.

of which, the Natives come on board with their Gold dust, Ivory, &c. which has given opportunities, too tempting it seems to be omitted, of treacherously carrying them off.—In Astley's collection of voyages it is said, that this villainous custom is too often practised, chiefly by the Bristol and Liverpool ships, and that it is a great detriment to the Slave Trade on the windward coasts. William Smith remarks, that among the petty kingdoms along the coasts there are so few wars, that on this account the Slave Trade is not so good here as on the Gold and Slave Coast, where the Europeans have several forts and factories: a plain proof this (when it is known that the Negroes are furnished with arms and ammunition), that it is the intercourse, which the natives have with the Europeans and their Settlements, which gives life and spirit to the Slave Trade.

Next to the Ivory we come to the principal mart for Slaves, called the Gold and Slave Coast, which extends also five hundred miles along the sea-shore. Here the Europeans have the greatest number of forts and factories, from whence, by means of Negroe Factors, a trade is carried on into the inland country, whence vast numbers of Slaves are procured. Here the Natives are found more reconciled to the European manners and trade, but at the same time more inured to war, and more ready to assist the European traders in procuring loading for the great number of vessels which arrive every year for Slaves. Bosman, the principal factor for the Dutch, speaks of this country as a land that yields its manurers as plentiful a crop as they could wish, with great quantities of palm-wine and ol, besides being furnished with all sorts of tame and wild beasts; but that the last fatal wars had reduced it to a miserable condition, and stripped it of most of its inhabitants; and speaking of Fetu, the adjoining country, he adds, that it was formerly so powerful and populous, that it struck a terror into all the neighbouring nations, but that it is at present so drained by continual wars, as to be entirely ruined; there not remaining inhabitants sufficient to till the country, which is pleasant and fruitful. Barbot and Smith confirm this account of its fertility, with the addition that the Slave Coast produces all sorts of trees, fruits, roots and herbs, that grow within the
torrid

torrid zone; that the husbandry of the Negroes is carried on with great regularity; and their Government is properly established—but that this order is very much broken since the arrival of the Europeans.

AFRICANUS.

LETTER THE THIRD.

S I R,

I Proceed with the local description of the remainder of the coast of Guinea.

Next to the Slave coast is the kingdom of Benin, which, though it extends but about seven hundred miles along the sea, spreads so far inland, as to be esteemed the most powerful kingdom in Guinea—the soil and produce being much like those already described. Smith confirms the account of other travellers, as to their justice and civility to strangers: and Bosman says, “That his countrymen, the Dutch, who were often obliged to trust them till they returned next year, were sure to be honestly paid their whole debts—that by their laws theft, murder and adultery, are punished with death.” The town of Oedo, or Great Benin, is represented to be about sixty miles from the sea, containing thirty streets, commonly extending in a straight line from one gate to another, 20 fathoms wide, all which are guarded by soldiers; that in these streets markets are held every

every day for cattle, Ivory, Cotton, and many sorts of European goods; that the King of Benin is able to maintain more than 30,000 regular troops; that the natives are all Free Men, none but Foreigners being to be bought or sold there.

The last division of Guinea, from which Slaves are exported, are the kingdoms of Congo, Angola, and Benguela;—these lie to the south of Benin, extending, with the intermediate land, more than fifteen hundred miles along the coast. Great numbers of the natives of both these kingdoms profess the Christian religion, which was, long since, introduced by the Portuguese, who made early settlements in the country. The soil is said to be fruitful in general, producing great plenty of grain, Indian corn, and such quantities of rice, that it hardly bears any price, with fruits, roots, and palm-oil in plenty. Their Government is regularly established, and the natives discover a good understanding, are friendly to strangers, but more robust, healthy, and warlike, than those already described. In the town of Loango great quantities of cloth are made of different kinds, very fine and curious. The Slave Trade here is chiefly managed by the Portuguese, whose chief settlement is at St. Salvador; who carry it far up into the inland countries, and are said to send off annually from these parts 15,000 slaves. At Benguela, about ten degrees and an half south latitude the Slave Trade ends.

From the local account of Negroe-land and the coast of Guinea, arises one general observation—That the manners, the skill, and the customs of the Negroes are such as cannot justify the Slave Trade, on the plea of bettering their condition by this traffic, since their native shores of Africa are found capable of supplying them with the comforts and conveniences of life; that the Incapacity, the Stupidity, the Sulkiness, with which they are charged by the West India Planters, are not the characteristic qualities of all the Negroes, nor of the greater part of them, in their original state of freedom—the assertion therefore is not just, which pronounces that with them Society has always been a state of perpetual warfare, and that Europeans export them only to save them from a more cruel fate in their own country.

I wish,

I wish, Sir, to remark to you, the great difference which exists between the occasional exercise of force and fraud in carrying off the Africans into slavery, and the regular and constant system of the Traffic in the Human Species: the first is only a partial evil, but the second is a general calamity. It is undoubtedly certain, that the Portuguese, about fifty years before the discovery of the New World, began to entrap the Natives on the coast of Guinea, and carry them off for sale; but it is as undoubtedly certain, that the Slave Trade did not exist as a systematic branch of commerce, till after that the cruelties of the Spaniards had depopulated nearly one part of the New World, and contrived this method of repeopling it with a fresh Race imported from the Old. Then it was that liberty was given to Europeans, by the laws of their respective countries, to traffic in African Slaves; then it was that the famous * Affiento treaty determined what particular Nations might carry on this Traffic; then it was, in fine, that principles of commerce and self-interest were made to justify the supplying one country with the luxuries of life, at the expence of the population, and in some instances nearly the existence of another.

The distinction just mentioned has not, I think, been sufficiently attended to by writers on this subject; and the SLAVE TRADE has, in consequence, received, from its asserted antiquity, an authority to which it is not entitled. No nation, I will venture to assert, ever encouraged Slavery on the systematic plans upon which it is conducted now, and has been for two centuries past, on the coast of Guinea; the events of crimes in so-

* By the treaty of Utrecht, Philip the Fifth being declared King of Spain by the allies, it was settled as one of the articles between England and France, that the Affiento Contract should be transferred to the English. Accordingly a new instrument was signed, in May 1713, to last thirty years, and the furnishing of Negroes to the Spanish America was committed to the South-Sea Company; by virtue of which they were to furnish yearly 4880, for which they were to pay at the same rate as the French—with this condition, that for the first twenty-five years, only half the duty was to be paid for such as they should import beyond the stated number. A more unfortunate law against Africa could scarcely have been framed. By the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle, however, in 1748, this Affiento Contract between the English and Spaniards was abolished—having been interrupted by the war between these two Powers, which broke out in 1739: the trade is now thrown open.

ciety, or of wars between nations, producing slavery, may have been authorized by the custom and example of ancient manners; but the setting society, as it were, at enmity with itself, by encouraging the strong to seize the weak, and the cunning to entrap the unsuspecting, in order to sell them to strangers, and consign them to a slavery from whence they can never be redeemed, is a refinement of cruelty and injustice which has been left (to our shame be it spoken) for the age of modern inventions to adopt; and for the enlightened period of Commerce among men calling themselves Christians, to bring to perfection.

But it may be urged perhaps, that the description which has been given of the state of manners and society on the coast of Guinea is exaggerated; and that though we may have spoken the truth, yet we have not spoken the whole truth; for that there are histories of incessant wars, among the Giagas in particular, accompanied with wonderful devastations and incredible cruelties, where they kill and eat their prisoners; that therefore the condition of the slaves, if not bettered, is, at least, not made worse.

That Battel and some others have given us accounts of this savage tribe of Africans which make one shudder, is what I mean not to deny, nor even pass over; that there are also, with regard to the funeral obsequies of some of the chiefs of the countries already mentioned, customs which are cruel and shocking, is likewise mentioned by the very authors from whose accounts the general character of the Negroes has been taken; it is not intended to paint too flattering a picture of the Torrid Zone in Africa, many parts of which have enough to discourage Europeans from settling there upon other than commercial motives—but it is wished to have those climates known to be, what in reality they are, and what they have been found to be by those who have visited them, and have spoken the truth. The surprize which many of these persons have expressed, on finding, at their arrival on the western coast of Africa, the civilization and manners of the people so widely different from all accounts they had heard of or read; and the fertility of the country so far surpassing their expectations, shews, at least, how little dependance was to be placed on the accuracy of descriptions received previous to such their arrival—and is no weak proof that men may have been induced,

duced, through motives of interest and of self-justification, to mislead the public with regard to that part of the world from whence the Human Species has been made the principal branch of trade. Barbot, for fear it should seem that too favourable opinions should be formed of the Negroes on the Ivory coast, who are pronounced to be less disposed to internal wars than other nations, and whom we have mentioned in our second letter, to be more suspicious and shy of Europeans in consequence of having experienced their insincerity, without hesitation ventures to presume, that they bring Ivory on board as a bait to lure seamen on shore, and devour them; this he pronounces boldly, of a country in which he never landed, though he speaks quite otherwise of those in which he did land. And a modern defender of Slavery, who is angry with Mr. Ramsay for his use of the term **AFRICAN SLAVERY**, considers those as no Africans who live on the western coasts of Africa, because they are cut off in a singular manner from its other natives by its immense tracts of uninhabitable deserts to the North and South, and probably by impassable mountains to the East: just as if one were to assert that the English were not Europeans, because the channel separates them, in a singular manner, from their continent.

Thus has the unfortunate Negroe race been considered as neither deserving that humanity, which the human species lay natural claim to from each other—nor so much as entitled to the name of the continent to which they belong: but having accidentally been found useful in a foreign country, they are condemned without reserve as altogether useless in their own.

AFRICANUS.

C 2

LETTER

LETTER THE FOURTH.

S I R,

HOWEVER reluctant I may be to enter upon the subject of the Anthropophagi, or Man-eaters, yet it is necessary to say something concerning them; and as one great defence of the justice of the Slave Trade rests upon the asserted universality of this custom in the western coasts of Africa, it cannot with propriety be passed over in silence.

In the new edition of the Modern Universal History, which appears to contain a well connected account of the coast of Guinea, selected from the best authorities, it will not be found that this horrid practice has been justly charged upon the inhabitants of the countries between the rivers Senegal and Gambia. The diet of these Negroes is described to consist of rice, roots, and fruits; European spirits are much sought after by all, but can be obtained only by the richer part of them; their drink is water, palm wine, and a kind of beer, called Ballo, made of the grain of the country: this temperance however in eating is said to be not so much the result of virtue as of laziness, which prevents their going in search of game, their sheep and goats being kept for milk. Adanson says that "once during a terrible famine, "occasioned by their belief in the assertions of their marbutts, "or priests, that the seasons would produce abundant crops "without the labour and toil of their hands, they neglected the
" culture

“ culture of their fields entirely ; and after waiting two years
 “ for the performance of the impostor’s promise, they were re-
 “ duced to the greatest extremity of hunger, and that then they
 “ not only sold, but eat each other ; and the stronger, like wild
 “ beasts, preyed upon the weaker.”—This, however, was a
 singular case of distress—not an established habit.

It will not be found that this horrid practice has been justly charged upon the inhabitants of the Grain and Ivory coast, including the Sierra Leona, which produces abundance of fruits, roots, and different sorts of pulse, besides plenty of fish, all which constitute the common food of the natives—where monkeys are also so numerous, that they often form themselves into bodies, make incursions into the plantations, and spoil every thing they meet with : these monkeys are very large, and very sagacious,* and the Negroes are fond of their flesh, preferring it to that of all other animals, except the elephant. The natives of the division of the Grain coast in particular, are described as being guilty of no excesses in eating or drinking ; as being temperate and sober, from their dislike to gluttony and drunkenness.

The account relative to this practice, which Captain Snellgrave gives, would have been more probable, if he had seen what he relates to have happened in the camp of the King of Dahomè, a warlike inland Prince, who in the year 1726 invaded and conquered the kingdom of Whidah, situate on the Slave coast, because an open liberty of traffic by the sea-side, for the exportation of Negroes, was not allowed him : but though this gentleman was for a considerable time in the camp of the Conqueror, was well received there, and had audience of the King, whom he pronounces to be no Cannibal, yet he asserts, upon hearsay only, that human flesh was eaten by the Dahomès, and even sold in their markets. That he should say this upon mere hearsay, when he was himself upon the spot ; and that he should not visit the markets, though he had opportunity, and professes himself to be more inquisitive than most other travellers, is a circumstance that must materially weaken the credit of his testi-

* May it not be conjectured that the practice among the Negroes of eating the flesh of monkeys may have occasioned the generality of the charge against them of being Cannibals.

mony. Mr. Atkins, who has visited most parts of the coast of Guinea, says, " that he never saw a flesh-market of any sort there; for that the moment a beast is killed, they immediately distribute the quarters among their neighbours, who in return do the same; because flesh will not keep a single day;" and of the Negroes in general, he says, " that they eat but little flesh of any kind, much less human flesh; but live chiefly on roots, corn, rice, nuts, and rancid fish," of some of which there is every where great plenty. Human flesh might doubtless have been exposed to sale in the markets of the camp, not dead for food however, but alive for slavery; this being the very Traffic which had been the grand object of the King of Dahomè's invasion and conquest; and which * continues to this day to be among the most considerable branches of his revenue; that Captain Snelgrave did not see any instance of human flesh being eaten or sold, may be considered therefore as proof, that no such practice as the first existed; and that what he had heard of the second, by accident or by design, he misrepresented.

On the Ivory coast, the diet of the poorest sort of Negroes is called Bomini, composed of rice, fish, fowl, kid, and elephants flesh, and all this boiled and thickened with palm oil, and a vegetable substance called oca. Villault and Smith accuse them, but without foundation, of being fond of human flesh; for the first contradicts himself, and the second is contradicted by Des Marchais, who after describing them as the most rational, polished, and civilized people in all Guinea, subjoins, that they drink a sort of beer called Pito, and wine drawn from the Bourbon palm-tree, (the fruit of which they eat with great pleasure) which is mixed with water to prevent its intoxicating quality; drunkenness being a crime of so odious a nature, that it is prohibited under the severest penalties, and even death itself.

Neither has this horrid practice been justly charged on the inhabitants of the Gold, the Slave coast, or the kingdom of Benin; on the two former of which there is such abundance of fish, as to constitute the principal support both of the Europeans and Negroes; the palm and cocoa trees grow there also in great

* The Tax on Slaves shipped off in Whidah, before this Conquest, in some years is said to have amounted to near Twenty Thousand Pounds.

plenty :

plenty : the inhabitants are described as very temperate in eating, but very intemperate in the use of strong liquors, which they will procure at any rate, and drink at all times. As to the people of Benin, the state of society there is too regularly established to have them suspected of such practices—their common diet being beef, mutton, fowls, with yams for bread, which, after boiling, they beat into a sort of cake :—the wealthy frequently make entertainments for each other, the fragments of which are given to the poor, whose general food is yams with smoked or dried fish—moreover the King and great men support, according to their ability, a certain number of poor at their places of residence, and the public officers keep the idle at work ; so that in Benin vagrants and beggars are seldom seen.

With respect to Congo, Angola, and Benguela, which belong chiefly to the Portugueze, and are said to abound in corn, pulse, nuts, cattle, fowl, and fish, it does not appear that their Voyagers and Missionaries accuse the Natives of being Cannibals ; but they assert that they have seen this horrid custom prevail among the Giagas ; and our countryman Battel, who served in their armies for some time during their incursions into Congo, and their desolations of Angola, confirms this assertion. The Giagas, Sir, are savage wandering tribes, situated principally in Ethiopia, towards the southern parts of the centre of Africa, before you come to Caffraria—the accounts given of the shocking scenes of cruelties, which every where accompanied their incursions, almost surpass belief ; for these tribes are said to feed upon each other ; though plunder is made the grand object of their invasions, and though their camp is always represented as stored with corn, palm-wine, oil, cattle, and all manner of provisions, on which they feed as long as they last, and then set forth on fresh incursions for fresh plunder and provisions, after having exhausted the conquered countries of whatever they contained. Revenge is the great reason with savages for destroying their enemies ; and Wars are undertaken by some of them for the sake of torturing, and by others, for the sake of eating their prisoners ; but we do not meet with satisfactory proofs of Savage Nations retaining this practice in peace, as well as in war ; of devouring friends, as well as enemies. However, allowing the truth of what Battel and others have said of these

these wandering tribes of Giagas, that they devour their prisoners, this will never justify the principles on which the Slave Trade is conducted in other countries, where there are none of these savage tribes, and no such customs: still therefore it may with justice be maintained, that the accounts of early Voyagers to the coast of Guinea, so far as they relate to this horrid practice, are not to be credited; that in this fact in particular, of which they ought to have had the surest evidence, they are found by later Voyagers to have been most generally deceived; for that in every instance, a more intimate acquaintance with these western coasts of Africa, from which the English principally carry on the Slave Trade, has demonstrated, that no traces of such practices are discovered, and that Cannibals are no where there to be found.

AFRICANUS.

LETTER THE FIFTH.

S I R,

UPON whatever grounds African Merchants and West-India Planters may be induced to approve the principle and conduct of the Slave Trade, it may, I fancy, be justly said, that their approbation is an exception to the generally received opinion of the civilized part of mankind; for that though interest be the leading motive, as well as ultimate end of all commercial systems, yet an appearance at least of reciprocal advantage, if not always the reality, is proposed by the contracting parties.

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In this point, however, as in most others, the Slave Trade has its own peculiar demerit, by presenting no one real benefit to the natives of Africa, in return for all the violence and miseries which it occasions.

The evil is perhaps of too great magnitude to be altogether remedied by * Individuals; and as all nations concerned in it have hitherto made little account of any circumstance but the profit which it produces, they have in general tolerated and even encouraged the practice.

The Traffic, such as we now find it established, certainly crept in unawares among other articles of public commerce, and has gained ground in despite of the cautious prohibitions which attend it at its first beginning: Prospects of gain were too well founded to give way to considerations of humanity; and the anxious apprehensions of Monarchs were speedily removed by concealment of facts, or by false representations of them. A singular instance of the unwillingness of Louis the 12th of France is recorded by Labat, in his History of the Isles of America. "The King," he says, "was extremely uneasy at a law by which the Negroes of his colonies were to be made slaves, but it being strongly urged to him as the readiest means for their conversion to Christianity, he acquiesced therewith." Possibly some such equally plausible pretext might have occasioned Queen Elizabeth's submitting in the latter part of her reign to connive at this article of African commerce, which she had decidedly reprobated in the former.

Alonzo Gonzales, about the year 1434, first taught his countrymen, the Portugueze, to make Slaves of the Africans; and set the example of piratical depredations on the coast of Guinea, for this purpose. His example was quickly followed by others, and Portugueze vessels, properly manned and armed, made frequent attacks on different parts of the coast, surprized villages by night, and carried off numbers of both sexes into slavery: In 1481, they erected their first fort at D'Elmina, on the Gold coast, from

* By individuals is meant individual persons, and not individual bodies of men as, opposed to nations—for the conduct of the Quakers and others in America, who have, much to their credit, abolished the Slave Trade, would be an exception to this latter assertion.

whence they soon opened a traffic for Slaves with the inland parts of Guinea, which, after the depopulation of America by the Spaniards, increased to a most astonishing degree; so that the annual WASTE of Negroes from that period to the present, when computed, will be found to have amounted to the dreadful number of near TWENTY MILLIONS * of people.

About the middle of the 16th century, and towards the latter end of the reign of Edward the 6th, the first trading voyage from England to the coast of Guinea took place; but the English not having at that time any plantations in the West-Indies, and consequently no occasion for Negroes, they traded only for gold, elephants teeth, and Guinea pepper. In 1554, considerable quantities of gold and ivory were brought from D'Elmina by an English trader, whose reports of the natives at that period were, *that whoever will deal with them must behave civilly, for that they will not traffic if ill used*; and in the next year they are represented by another trader, as *complaining of the Portugueze at D'Elmina, that they were bad men, who made slaves of them if they could take them, putting irons on their legs*.

The exportation of Slaves, however, was also soon adopted by the English in their turn, and became so notorious, as to occasion Queen Elizabeth to send for Captain Hawkins, a principal African trader, to caution him against carrying off the Negroes by violence, and without their own free consent; which she declared would be detestable, and would call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the undertakers. Great promises were accordingly made---but this caution seems to have had little effect; for not long after, the same person, with the assistance of others, fitted out three ships for the Guinea coast, and having learnt that Negroes were a profitable commodity at Hispaniola, he took in a cargo of Slaves, and sold them at that port to great advantage; and thus became the first Englishman who set on foot this horrid traffic. After this, Negroes were every where procured by purchase, by force, or by stratagem,* and sent off to America and to the Colonies by hundreds and by thousands.

About

* For every Negroe conveyed to the Islands, it is estimated that near two are lost to Africa; for every one hundred thousand procured for the ships, about sixty thousand are

About the 30th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth (the nation being then at war with Spain and Portugal) a company was erected, with exclusive privileges, for the better discovering and carrying on a trade from the Senegal to the Gambia. Soon after the Restoration, it was incorporated by letters patent in 1662, under the name of the African Company, and continued so till 1697, when the Parliament, taking the African trade into their consideration, thought proper to lay it open for 13 years, imposing, at the same time, a duty of 10 per cent. ad valorem, on all goods and merchandize exported to Africa during that time. At the end of this term, however, the Company were divested of their charter entirely, after having received some compensation from Government towards their expenditures in forts and other matters; and in consideration of the trade being laid open to all his Majesty's subjects, the Parliament allowed the sum of 10,000*l.* per annum to be vested in certain merchants for the support of forts and castles for the public service.—Thus has it continued ever since, the trade to Africa being now carried on by private merchants from London and Bristol, but principally from Liverpool *.

The progress therefore of the Slave Trade appears to have been thus—When the demand for Slaves became greater than could be supplied by the original methods of force or fraud, the more successful plan of purchase was added to them; and instead of Europeans seizing the natives by their own arms, they employed the arms of Africans to this work, encouraging one nation to make war upon another, merely for the sake of procuring Slaves; and paying for those Slaves with commodities which might

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are destroyed by battles, long marches, &c.; of these one hundred thousand delivered to the ships, one fifth, or twenty thousand, are averaged to be lost on the passage, so that only eighty thousand arrive in the Colonies; and, of these eighty thousand which are landed and sold, another fifth are averaged to perish from despair, and in the seasoning.

* About two-thirds of the slaves bought on the Slave Coast, by English traders, are sold by them or their factors to the French and other foreigners. The English, by their enterprising turn, push this commerce much farther than all other European nations; so that if they were to give it up, a great part of it would be at an end.

It is also carried on by vessels from the West India islands.

R A M S A Y.

enable and induce them to keep alive such hostilities. Add to all this, that henceforth every, even the most trifling, crime was punished by slavery, and that, not of the guilty person only, but of his family and children. Private individuals (as well as the chief men and Kings of the countries on the coast of Guinea) were bribed by every thing that might encourage them to entrap each other for sale; no species of cunning was omitted, and no act of violence was restrained by which Slaves could be procured; the natural produce of the country was no longer thought of, a decay of all other articles ensued, and the Nations of Europe despising the Gold, the Ivory, the Pepper, the Gums, and the Woods of Africa, loaded their vessels with crowds of wretched Negroes, to be carried off into cruel and perpetual Slavery; so that *the discerning natives accounted it their greatest unhappiness that they were ever visited by Europeans; for that we CHRISTIANS introduced the traffic of Slaves, and that before our coming they lived in peace.*

Such, Sir, is the general History of the *Origin and Progress* of the Slave Trade; and whatever those whose interest is concerned in it may pretend to say in its justification, they will not easily be able to contradict historical facts, which prove, that it originated in private prospects of gain; was established by violence and treachery; and has been conducted for two centuries past, even to this day, with a spirit of *cruelty and injustice* unknown in the history of *any other* people or *any other* country.

AFRICANUS.

LETTER

LETTER THE SIXTH.

SIR,

THE true and only real plea for the Slave trade is the necessity of procuring men to work in the West-India Islands and in America; this may therefore be considered as the plea of interest when applied to individuals, and of policy when applied to nations.

The Trade indeed, such as it will be found to be, when we recite the particular circumstances of it, requires some sort of justification. Interest and policy are perhaps the best motives which can be assigned; but how far the policy of this country, which encourages, or even permits, such a traffic, is well regulated, will, ere long, it is to be hoped, become a subject of Parliamentary investigation.

Hitherto we have dealt in general assertions of cruelty, treachery, and injustice, in the conduct of the Slave Trade; we now proceed to mark particular instances of them---collected from relations and accounts not taken up at hazard, but founded on facts; which are described by persons who were eye-witnesses of what they have written, and who had no interest in concealing circumstances, and no wish to exaggerate them.

Francis Moore relates, " that when the King of Barsfalli wants goods or brandy, he sends a messenger to the English Gover-

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“ nor at James-fort, to desire he would send up a sloop there
 “ with a cargo; this news being not at all unwelcome, the
 “ Governor sends accordingly: against the arrival of the
 “ sloop, the King goes and ransacks some of his enemies towns,
 “ seizing the people, and selling them for such commodities
 “ as he is in want of, which commonly are brandy, guns,
 “ powder, ball, pistols, and cutlasses, for his attendants and
 “ soldiers; and coral and silver for his wives and concubines.
 “ *In case he is not at war with any neighbouring King, he then falls*
 “ *upon one of his own towns, which are numerous, and uses it in*
 “ *the same manner. He often goes with some of his troops by*
 “ *a town in the day-time, and returning in the night, sets fire to*
 “ *three parts of it, and putting the guards at the fourth, there*
 “ *seizes the people as they run out from the fire; he ties their*
 “ *arms behind them, and marches them either to Joar or*
 “ *Cohone, where he sells them to the Europeans.*”

De Brue, the French Director, gives much the same account, and says, that having received goods, he wrote to the King, that if he had a sufficient number of Slaves, he was ready to trade with him. This Prince (says the author), as well as other Negroe Monarchs, has always a sure way of supplying his deficiencies by selling his own subjects. The King had recourse to this method, by seizing three hundred of his own people; and sent word to the Director, that he had the slaves ready to deliver for his goods. It seems the King wanted double the quantity of goods of those offered for these three hundred Slaves; but the Factor refusing to trust him, and perceiving that this refusal had put him out of temper, he proposed to the King that *he should give him a licence to take so many more of his subjects, as the goods he still wanted were worth*—but this the King refused, saying, “ It might occasion a disturbance among his subjects.”

These, Sir, are strong proofs, collected from many others that might be given, of the little regard which European Factors pay to the justice of the methods by which Slaves are acquired. Their own profit, and that of their employers, is in truth their only consideration; Slaves must be obtained, let the consequence

sequence of obtaining them be ever so pernicious --- no matter what *violence, treachery, and bloodshed* ensue.

I shall dedicate the remainder of this letter to two accounts of the method of seizing people for Slaves; the first of which is extracted verbatim from the journal of a surgeon of a Guinea ship from Liverpool; it speaks for itself, and needs no comment:—

“Sestro, Dec. 29, 1724. No trade to day, though many traders came on board; they informed us, that the people are gone to war within land; and will bring prisoners enough in two or three days, in hopes of which we stay.

“The 30th---No trade yet; but our traders came on board to-day and informed us, the people had burnt four towns of their enemies---so that to-morrow we expect Slaves off--- another large ship is come in---yesterday came in a large Londoner.

“31st---Fair weather, but no trade yet: we see each night towns burning, but we hear the Sestro men are many of them killed by the inland Negroes, *so that we fear this war will be unsuccessful.*

“The 2d of Jan. Last night we saw a prodigious fire break out about eleven o'clock; and this morning saw the town of Sestro burnt down to the ground (it contains some hundreds of houses); *so that we find that their enemies are too hard for them at present, and consequently our trade spoilt here*; therefore about seven o'clock we weighed anchor, as did likewise the other vessels, to proceed lower down.”

The other account is also taken from the original manuscript journal of a person of credit, who went as Surgeon on the same trade in a vessel from New-York, about twenty years ago.

“Being on the coast, the Commander of the vessel, *according to custom*, sent a person on shore with a present to the King, acquainting him with his arrival, and letting him know they wanted a cargo of Slaves. The King promised to furnish them with the Slaves; and IN ORDER TO DO IT, set out to go to war against his enemies, designing to surprize some town, and take all the people prisoners. Some time after the King sent them
word

word he had not yet met with the desired success; having been twice repulsed, in attempting to break up two towns, but that he still hoped to procure a number of Slaves for them, and in this design he persisted till he met his enemies in the field; where a battle was fought, which lasted three days, during which time the engagement was so bloody, that four thousand five hundred men were slain on the spot."

The person who wrote this account beheld the bodies as they lay on the field of battle.

After such instances as these, there needs I trust, Sir, no great strength of reasoning to determine, whether the SLAVE TRADE be the *consequence* or the *cause* of the numerous and bloody wars which are waged on the coast of Guinea. My next letter will contain some instances of the private system of treachery which this infamous traffic has established.

AFRICANUS.

LETTER THE SEVENTH.

SIR,

BEFORE I enter on the particulars of the private treachery by which Slaves are procured, I cannot avoid mentioning one more instance of the terrible consequence of the battles which this traffic occasions. The account is taken from Mr. Clarkson's *Essays on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*—

Species"—and is here given in the words of the person who was witness to the scene, which is too well authenticated to be omitted.

" I was sent, with several others, in a small sloop up the river Niger, to purchase Slaves: we had some free Negroes with us in the practice; and as the vessels are liable to frequent attacks from the Negroes on one side of the river, or the Moors on the other, they are all armed. As we rode at anchor a long way up the river, we observed a large number of Negroes in huts by the river side, and for our own safety kept a wary eye on them. Early next morning we saw from our mast-head a numerous body approaching, with apparently but little order, but in close array. They approached very fast, and fell furiously on the inhabitants of the town, who seemed to be quite surprized, but nevertheless, as soon as they could get together, fought stoutly. They had some fire-arms, but made very little use of them, as they came directly to close fighting with their spears, lances, and sabres. Many of the invaders were mounted on small horses; and both parties fought for about half an hour with the fiercest animosity, exerting much more courage and perseverance than I had ever before been witness to amongst them. The women and children of the town clustered together to the water's edge, running shrieking up and down with terror, waiting the event of the combat, till their party gave way and took to the water, to endeavour to swim over to the Barbary side. They were closely pursued even into the river by the victors, who, though they came for the purpose of getting Slaves, gave no quarter, their cruelty even prevailing over their avarice. They made no prisoners, but put all to the sword without mercy. Horrible indeed was the carnage of the vanquished on this occasion, and as we were within two or three hundred yards of them, their cries and shrieks affected us extremely. We had got up our anchor at the beginning of the fray, and now stood close in to the spot, where the victors having followed the vanquished into the water, were continually dragging out and murdering those, whom by reason of their wounds they easily overtook. The

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“ very children, whom they took in great numbers, did not
 “ escape the massacre. Enraged at their barbarity, we fired our
 “ guns loaden with grape shot, and a volley of small arms among
 “ them, which effectually checked their ardour, and obliged
 “ them to retire to a distance from the shore; from whence a
 “ few round cannon shot soon removed them into the woods.
 “ The whole river was black over with the heads of the fugi-
 “ tives, who were swimming for their lives. These poor
 “ wretches, fearing us as much as their conquerors, dived
 “ when we fired, and cried most lamentably for mercy. Hav-
 “ ing now effectually favoured their retreat, we stood back-
 “ wards and forwards, and took up several that were wounded
 “ and tired. All whose wounds had disabled them from swim-
 “ ming were either butchered or drowned, before we got up
 “ to them. With a justice and generosity, never I believe be-
 “ fore heard of among slavers, we gave those their liberty whom
 “ we had taken up, setting them on shore on the Barbary side,
 “ among the poor residue of their companions, who had sur-
 “ vived the slaughter of the morning.” *

A note

* A gentleman, in a letter written a few months since from Philadelphia to his friend in London, after observing that the spirit for promoting the relief of the deeply oppressed Africans was more diffused among people of all ranks, than at any former period, by the dispersion of Clarkson's ingenious Essay, which had founded an alarm through the American States more successfully than any publication on the same important subject had heretofore done, gives the following anecdote, which is here inserted as a piece of historical justice due to the Author of the Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species.

“ I have been told of a pleasant anecdote at a late Session of the Delaware Assembly;
 “ when the subject of Slavery was under debate, some members expressed their doubts
 “ of the practicability of a reform, others raised objections, among whom one expa-
 “ tiated a long time; when the House being near to adjourn, another briefly replied,
 “ that at their next coming together he would undertake to refute all their arguments;
 “ the next day the House was prevented sitting, or some other matter was taken up,
 “ which proved favourable to his views, having had only a cursory inspection of
 “ Clarkson, he had the opportunity of more attentively perusing him, for which pur-
 “ pose the Essay had been put into his hands, (being the only one which had then
 “ reached those parts), and having a retentive memory, he was enabled to repeat all
 “ the striking arguments of that Author, when the subject was resumed in the House,
 “ with such energy, as to command the attention and surprise of the Members, who
 “ united in a favourable law, repealing all the former objectionable Acts, prohibiting
 “ the future importation, and granting satisfactory relief respecting the liberation of
 “ Slaves; after which his fellow members in private conversation were inquisitive to
 “ know

A note subjoined to this melancholy narrative informs the publick that—The writer of the letter from which this is a faithful extract, and who was known to the author of the Essay, was a long time on the African coast. He had once the misfortune to be shipwrecked there, and to be taken by the natives, who conveyed him and his companions a considerable way up into the country. The hardships which he underwent in the march, his treatment during his captivity, the scenes to which he was witness while he resided among the inland Africans, as well as while in the African trade, gave occasion to a series of very interesting letters. These letters were sent to the author (with liberty to make what use of them he chose) by the gentleman to whom they were written.

Numberless other instances might indeed be collected of similar acts of bloodshed; but I wish not to fix the publick attention to such scenes and transactions longer than is necessary to prove to them the magnitude of the evil complained of, and to justify the assertions which have been made respecting the perfidy and barbarity by which the Trade is conducted. Those who wish for more accurate information may consult Mr. Clarkson's Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species throughout, which is written with great precision, and a serious regard to truth.

Not only, however, is the wanton exercise of tyranny kept in continual play, but society is also set at enmity with itself, in order to supply Slaves for the demands of Europeans: Individuals in Africa are now to stand in constant terror, not of their Princes merely, but of their Equals and Companions—and have to apprehend the sudden attacks of private treachery, as well as of publick violence. The Black Factors, who are commissioned to bring Slaves from the inland countries, procure them by every method of deceit which the ingenuity of man can devise: they seize, and employ others to seize, without ceremony, whole families, if perchance they meet with a solitary hut, and are powerful enough to carry off its inhabitants—They steal every little Black to be found in the roads, or in the

“ know by what means he had become so complete master of the subject, when he
 “ acknowledged with candour, his instruction was derived from Clarkson's treatise:
 “ which has been since more known amongst them.”

fields, where their parents keep them all day to watch the corn and the rice---they lie in wait around the outskirts of a plantation or Negroe-town, concealed in the long grass, and surprise every straggler, of whatever age or sex, that falls in their way. Thousands are annually procured by this treacherous system, and led, in droves like beasts,† fastened together with forks, toward the sea coasts, or to the nearest banks of the navigable rivers: the hardships which these miserable creatures,† thus kidnapped, undergo in their journey, often some hundreds of miles distant from their own places of abode, are so great, that they perish in numbers through hunger and fatigue; perhaps more fortunate in this their fate, than those who survive in slavery and wretchedness.

Thus has the commercial alacrity of Europeans contrived to supply Slaves for America and the West-Indies, by spreading the Spirit of deceit, of treachery, and of bloodshed, through the heart of Africa; by arming the Prince against his subjects, and setting each man at war with his neighbour; and thus have the Senegal,* the Niger, and the Gambia, opened an intercourse which

† Hist. Pol. par L'Abbé Raynal, Tom. 4. p. 135.

† The following instance of the spirit of kidnapping were furnished me by a person who has been several voyages to the Coast of Guinea—"A Negroe informed me, that being one evening invited to drink with some black Traders, on his going away, they attempted to seize him, but, being very active, he got away from them, and would in all probability have effected his escape, had it not been for a large dog, which the Traders are generally fond of keeping, which seized him and detained him till he was taken—a Negroe woman being on a visit to some neighbours by invitation, was on her return homewards in the evening kidnapped, and, though big with child, sold as a slave; as she was kidnapped a considerable way up the country, she passed through several hands before she was brought to the ship I belonged to.—A man and his son were seized a considerable way up the country, while they were planting yams, and sold by professed kidnappers, and, like the former, passed through several hands before they were brought to us. I saw myself the following instance happen, A black Trader invited a countryman to come and see him, and after the entertainment was over, proposed their going to see a ship; the man consenting, accompanied the Trader in a canoe, on coming along-side the ship he viewed her with surprise, when suddenly some black Traders on board (who appeared to be in the secret) jumped into the canoe, seized him, brought him on board, and sold him.

A Negroe in the West Indies informed me, that after having kidnapped others, he had been kidnapped in his turn himself, and that this was a common custom.

* De Brue says of the country on the Senegal River, that it is very populous, and the soil rich: and that if the people were industrious, they might, of their own produce, carry on a very advantageous trade with strangers, there being but few things in which they could be excelled; but he adds, IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT EUROPEANS WILL NEVER LET THEM INTO THE SECRET.

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destroys the society, discourages the cultivation, and restricts the trade of an abundant and productive country: the sight of an European ship has long since become the signal for open hostility, or the reward of private fraud; and the natives are now found every where prepared to fly or to resist; knowing, that if attacked by a superior force, they enjoy but the wretched alternative of slaughter or of slavery.

AFRICANUS.

LETTER THE EIGHTH.

SIR,

WHERE a Traffic, such as has become the subject of these letters, opposes the natural rights of man, and destroys the natural confidence of social intercourse, it must of necessity be conducted and supported by violent proceedings; so that force and fraud may be considered rather as essential than accidental parts of it: for we are delighted when now and then a few sparks of humanity start forth and surprise us, amid the general gloom of oppression which prevails. It cannot therefore reasonably be objected to us, that we bring the darkest part of the picture to the public view, for the purpose of placing matters in an unfair light; since the truth is, we cannot easily take the general conduct or particular circumstances of the Slave Trade into our consideration, without perceiving the violent and deceitful spirit of it press upon us at every step in the inquiry; * without feeling an unwillingness to give our assent to many things, and an impossibility of withholding it. The justice of these assertions will quickly strike every body who considers the Slave Trade as a matter merely of historical or commercial information, without any interested view in it, or any predetermination to justify or condemn the practice—the progress of such inquiry will be painful, for it will lead him to form severe opinions of his coun-

* See Clarkson's Essay, p. 159 and 160, the impossibility of Collingwood's behaviour would probably have been insisted on, if it had been less positively and publicly proved.

trymen,

trymen; and it will shew him that the plea of political necessity, which has given the trade its importance, is the only plausible excuse for the injustice it occasions.

But of this general habit of violence towards the Negroes, there are proofs from the complaints of Captains of Guinea ships, as well as from relations of Voyagers and Agents in the country. When we hear one of these Captains without remorse stating "the difficulty he found in setting the Negroes a fighting with each other, in order to procure the number he was in want of;" we may be assured, that the means of procuring them are not so gentle or so regular as the public are made to believe; and when this difficulty is still increased " * in getting them when on board to take any food, as many of them choose rather to die with hunger than be carried off," we want no farther assurance that they go not willingly into slavery, as a resource from greater evils at home; and that they quit not (as is reported of them) their native country, without extreme reluctance.

* Upon further enquiry from this Captain by what means he had prevailed upon them to forego this desperate resolution, he replied, "that he obliged all the Negroes to come upon deck, where when they persisted in their resolution of not taking food, he caused his sailors to lay hold upon one of the most obstinate, and chopt the poor creature into small pieces, forcing some of the others to eat a part of the mangled body: withal swearing to the survivors, that he would use them all, one after another, in the same manner, if they did not consent to eat." This horrid execution he applauded as a good act, it having had the desired effect in bringing them to take food. *Benezet's Caution*, p. 26.

I have seen (said a gentleman lately concerned in the trade, on being applied to for information on this subject) when Negroes refuse taking sustenance, live coals of fire taken on a shovel, and placed near their mouths, accompanied with threats of obliging them to swallow the coals, if they persisted in refusing food; which generally had the desired effect: and I have been credibly informed of a certain Captain in the Slave Trade, who poured melted lead on such as refused to eat; probably, however, it may be only on particular occasions, where the refusal is general, and appears concerted, that such dreadful methods are adopted: on more common ones, and where merely an individual or two is obstinate in refusing food, lighter punishments are inflicted; cats of nine tails, thumb screws, wrenches for forcing the jaws open, are sold in Liverpool and Bristol, with sundry other iron implements, to Guinea ships, for the purpose of preventing Negroes from starving themselves to death, or jumping overboard, and drowning themselves. In a voyage made by a Captain Phillips along the coast of Guinea (mentioned in Churchill's Coll. of Voyages, Vol. 6. p. 219.) in a ship of 450 Tons, with 700 Negroes on board, it is said, that many of them leaped overboard, and kept under water till they were drowned, and many starved themselves to death. Phillips was advised to cut off the arms and legs of some to terrify the rest (as other Captains had done) but this he refused to do. Of these 700 there died of various diseases 320 ere the ship arrived at Barbadoes.

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Let the merchants, concerned in this trade, say therefore what they will of their right to purchase those whom the Princes of the country claim a right to sell by way of punishment for crimes, we cannot admit the justice of their assertion, so long as matters of fact shew us, that the great opportunity of sale constitutes the cause of such punishment; and that the Princes of Africa, having been taught to consider the demands of Europeans for slaves as a source of increasing their revenues, have not hesitated, as one method of supplying these demands, to convert every offence into a crime, and to condemn every criminal TO BE SOLD into slavery. How, thus situated, Sir, can the wretched African hope to escape his fate, when, in retirement, he must always be on his guard against private violence and treachery—and when, in their towns, any offence in himself, any resentment, or even caprice of a superior, will instantly consign him, and probably his family, to perpetual bondage in a distant part of the world.*

There are, Sir, in many countries of Africa, numbers who are born in a state of servitude, over whom their masters possess absolute power even of life and death. These domestic slaves constitute the wealth, become the pride, and mark the consequence of their masters; for the rank of individuals among the Negroes is sometimes determined by the numbers of their slaves, who are well treated in general, are employed in fishing, and agriculture, and such arts as are necessary to the support of their masters and themselves:—of these, doubtless, numbers are sold to Europeans; yet about the Gambia they think it a very wicked thing to sell a family slave; but whether such an exchange of servitude be to their advantage or no, it is not difficult to determine.

The first instance of the absolute subjection under which slaves are to be held, and of the hard treatment they are likely to receive from their new masters, appears the moment they arrive on the sea-coast, where the rendezvous for the shipping is situ-

* Moore relates, that a native of Mayer, shooting his arrows at a tiger, who had killed his goat, unfortunately slew a man. The king, though he was apprized of the circumstances, inhumanly sold the offender, his wife, children, and effects among the other slaves for whom he had bargained with the English.

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ated; † they are all put together in close confinement, in a state in which they probably could not, from the heat of the climate, long exist, did not the ships which frequent the place prevent their being too long detained. The moment a ship arrives, they are all brought out to be examined by the ship-surgeons, who handle them, without any regard to decency, as a grazier does his beasts: those who are found perfect and saleable, are set apart, and marked on the breast with a hot iron ‡ with the mark of the company or owner; after which they are put on board the vessels, the men being shackled with irons two and two together. Why this wanton act of barbarity should have been adopted, when so many other more gentle methods of distinguishing the property in slaves might be practised, it would be perhaps not pleasant to investigate—suffice it to say, that Europeans have no right to charge African manners with cruelty, while they shew such instances of want of humanity in their own.

You will allow me, Sir, to call your attention in this place to a thought which has struck me too forcibly to be passed over in silence; and which seems to prove how much the greatest blessings which mankind possess may be abused, and converted to bad purposes.

The free enjoyment of person and property, as established by our constitution, and secured by our laws, is considered by every Englishman, and justly so, as the most valuable treasure he possesses. Suppose, Sir, to this strongly guarded sanctuary of personal property once legally acquired, I should venture to ascribe great part of the misery which appears authorized, as it were, in the conduct of the Slave Trade, the application would, I

† At Cape Coast Castle there is cut in the rock beneath the platform a large vault for the confinement of slaves. This horrid dungeon is divided into a number of cells, well contrived to prevent their revolting, or forming conspiracies. Such only are confined there, who are purchased for exportation. An iron grate serves it for a roof to admit the air, and as much light as is thought necessary; and the numbers of ships, which frequent the coast, prevent their being so long detained as to contract distempers, the consequence of close confinement. *Mod. Univ. Hist.* vol. 13. p. 431.

‡ Those which are approved as good, are set on one side: in the mean time a burning iron, with the arms or name of the Company, lies in the fire, with which ours are burnt in the breast. *Bosman*, p. 340.

I have been given to understand, that the English do not brand their slaves till they are sold in the West Indies, and that the branding is then done on the shoulder.

imagine,

imagine, be found not altogether unjust. May it not be to this principle that the Slave Trade is considered in the light of a transfer of private property, with the conduct of which (provided it be not illegal) the law has no concern? May it not be to this respect for private property, that the supineness of the Legislature is to be attributed? When slaves are considered as a mere article of commerce, and held in no higher estimation than a bale of goods, worth just what they will fetch at market price, of which the accidents, damages or loss, are the merchant's only concern; when a cargo of slaves, like a cargo of any other merchandize, may be ensured from the danger of the sea—who will give themselves any concern about the manner in which they are treated, or take account of the loss of lives which may happen? If for fear of an insurrection in a storm, or of an imaginary shortness of provisions or water, a Captain takes it into his head to throw a score or two of them overboard fettered as they are—who judges the merits or demerits of such an action? If farther, upon any illness breaking out among them, another * Captain has recourse to the same expeditious method of causing the loss to fall on the underwriters rather than the owners; are there not those who would give him praise for the contrivance? While the owners therefore are safe, the loss of a few slaves is it seems of little moment; the prime cost of the sufferers is quickly replaced, and ready to purchase others in their stead. Interest, you will observe, Sir, can, in this case, have no very strong tie on the mind; and there is an end of the justice of what is urged in behalf of the good treatment of the Negroes—that it is the

* On the 29th of November 1781, fifty-four Slaves were thrown alive into the sea from a Guinea-ship commanded by one Captain Collingwood: on the 30th, forty-two more shared the same fate; and in about three days afterwards, twenty-six more. Ten others who were brought upon deck for the same purpose, did not wait to be handcuffed, but bravely leaped into the sea, and shared the fate of their companions. It is a fact, which came out in evidence in the course of the trial at the Court of King's Bench, Guildhall, sometime in March 1783, that the people on board this ship had not been put on short allowance: the excuse which the Mate of the ship, who gave the evidence, made for this conduct was, that if the Slaves, who were then sickly had died a natural death, the loss would have been the owners; but as they were thrown alive into the sea, it would fall upon the underwriters.—The action was brought by the Owners against the Underwriters, to recover the value of the murdered slaves.

interest of the Captains to treat them kindly; for when we consider this interest, such as it really is, namely, the price of his insurance, it will hardly be thought good security against a person in full possession of power; inured to a series of severities such as the coasts of Africa are perpetually presenting; and secure from the terrors of impending law, and I might almost say, the probability of being called to account.

Evils of this magnitude surely, Sir, may with propriety be considered as entitled to the attention of the Legislature, which although it is deservedly stigmatized with permitting, and even encouraging this horrid traffic, has never yet provided for making the authors of known cruelty to them amenable to any law, or subject to any restriction.

This argument from interest has been urged so frequently as a self-evident proposition, that I shall be pardoned I hope for pointing out its inefficacy towards securing the good treatment of slaves on shipboard.

A Guinea ship may be said to resemble a smuggling vessel in some particulars; from good authority I can allege, that on an average one good voyage will do no more than pay for one bad one, and not near for two bad ones; but can this be a principle which deserves encouragement from the first commercial nation in the world, even admitting that it may fill the coffers of a few individuals? Is it in such a traffic, and with such peculiar risks, that Great Britain can with any part of its capital of sixty millions of property to be employed?

As to the power of the passions in getting the better of the claims of interest, urgent as they are, I shall not venture to insist upon it here, because, however numerous and glaring be the examples of it in every given circumstance of uncontrouled authority, the advocates of the Slave Trade do not choose to admit its influence in this case. Possibly one might be inclined to believe what they say of it, if matters of fact did not most unfortunately contradict the truth of their assertion in every stage of the business.

AFRICANUS.

LETTER THE NINTH.

S I R,

YOU will permit me, e'er I proceed in my Narration of a Guinea Voyage across the Atlantic, to call your attention to the contents of the following extract of a letter which I have been favoured with, written from Philadelphia, and dated so lately as the sixth of March last; the sentiments of people living in that part of the world on this subject, deserve to be made public here: they come with more energy and force from the inhabitants of a country, where the Slave Trade has been encouraged, and where Slavery is not yet altogether at an end.

Extract of a Letter from Philadelphia.

“ The underwriters of the City of Philadelphia are about one third of the society of Friends, who all refuse to underwrite any vessel that is employed in the trade of Africa; but the sentiment is adopted by many of them who are not of that church: I have known a policy on that kind of property opened for 10,000 l. and there could not be subscriptions procured for more than 1600 l. though the whole sum in ordinary lines of trade would be effected with ease. This trade is not now carried on by any native of Pennsylvania, and I believe not in more than one case on account of any house here.

“ The principle of holding men in slavery is really held to be criminal by people of all parties, all churches, and every condition in life; so that a steady and respectable opposition is made to it—Our Sheriff takes great pains to prevent any appearance of public sales of them, when their unfortunate bodies are taken in execution of their owner's debts.—Your late friend W—— A——, Esq. freed all his slaves by his will, and allowed them aid for their subsistence; the H——

family have done the same, and there are a great many others, of various religious persuasions, who follow such examples. Your church has so decidedly disapproved of the practice, that I need say nothing in regard to them.

“ I am informed by a Gentleman of great weight in Virginia, that a sentiment is prevailing in that State very favourable to the Negroes: they think the practice of holding Slaves tends to promote habits of idleness, and of course, to destroy the activity and energy of the white people, that many things among them are badly executed, and others entirely neglected, for want of a spirit of industry, which arises from the use of Slaves. As this is a great and certain truth, I expect much from the influence of it upon minds so enlarged and liberal as many of the Virginians possess.

“ The Society established in New-York, I presume is well known to you, I therefore shall say no more of it than that it is headed by some of the most weighty and respectable people in the State. They have corresponded with us, and taken all the information we could give them, when they were forming themselves.

“ The great share which France holds in the Sugar Islands suggested it as an object of consequence to many of us that we should try to disseminate our principles among the Gentlemen of that nation here; *our attempts have been very kindly received, and we are encouraged to go on.* It may lead to kinder treatment immediately, and finally, perhaps, to a system of gradual abolition.”

PHILADELPHIA, March 6, 1787.

If to this account of the private sentiments, which prevail not in Pennsylvania alone, but in several other States, relative to Slavery and the Slave Trade, be added the following public address, of a subsequent date, to the Convention of the United States of America, now assembled at Philadelphia, we shall have the best reasons to hope, that so benevolent and just an object as is expressed in the Memorial will be attended with better success than were the petitions presented to the throne of Great Britain from the same quarter in the year 1772.---There has been a persevering spirit of benevolence among the Quakers concerning this liberal plan,

plan, for the emancipation and protection of Negroe Slaves, which must place the general selfishness of commerce in a very unamiable point of view. And when the blessings of freedom and protection shall in some future period have been generally extended to that numerous and persecuted race; when mankind shall have felt the good effects of abolishing that system of Slavery, which has so long disgraced the annals of the Kingdoms of Europe: then will the impartial page of history do justice to the Quakers, for their upright dealings with mankind; and record that HONOURABLE EXAMPLE, which the most powerful and enlightened nations shall have been proud to follow.

This Society, the President of which is Dr. Franklin, has lately presented the following Memorial to the Convention of the United States:

To the Honourable the Convention of the United States of America, now assembled in the city of Philadelphia: The Memorial of the Pennsylvania Society, for promoting the abolition of Slavery, and the relief of free Negroes, unlawfully held in bondage.

The Pennsylvania Society, for promoting the abolition of Slavery, and the relief of free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage, rejoice with their fellow-citizens in beholding a Convention of the States assembled, for the purposes of amending the federal constitution.

They recollect, with pleasure, that among the first acts of the illustrious Congress of the year 1774, was a resolution for prohibiting the importation of African Slaves.

It is with deep distress they are forced to observe, that the peace was scarcely concluded before the African trade was revived, and American vessels employed in transporting the inhabitants of Africa, to cultivate, as Slaves, the soil of America, before it had drank in all the blood which had been shed in her struggle for liberty.

To the revival of this trade, the Society ascribe part of the obloquy with which foreign nations have branded our infant States. In vain will be their pretensions to a love of liberty, or a regard for national character, while they share in the profits of a commerce that can only be conducted upon rivers of human tears and blood.

By

By all the attributes therefore of the Deity, which are offended by this inhuman traffic---By the union of our whole species in a common ancestor, and by all the obligations which result from it---By the apprehensions and terror of the righteous vengeance of God in national judgments---By the certainty of the great and awful day of retribution---By the efficacy of the prayers of good men, which would only insult the Majesty of Heaven, if offered up in behalf of our country, while the iniquity we deplore continues among us---By the sanctity of the Christian name---By the pleasures of domestic connections, and the pangs which attend their dissolution---By the captivity and sufferings of our American brethren in Algiers, which seem to be intended by Divine Providence, to awaken us to a sense of the injustice and cruelty of dooming our African brethren to perpetual slavery and misery---By a regard to the consistency of principle and conduct which should mark the citizens of Republics---By the magnitude and intensity of our desires to promote the happiness of those millions of intelligent beings, who will probably cover this immense Continent with rational life; and by every other consideration that religion, reason, policy, and humanity can suggest, the Society implore the present convention to make the suppression of the African trade, in the United States, a part of their important deliberations.

Signed, by order of the Society, by

JONATHAN PENROSE,
Vice-President.

June 2, 1787.

What a conduct is here presented to the Mother Country for her imitation! who would suspect that while America is thus laying the axe to the root of this infamous Traffic, there should be found in England, * Merchants who, at this time of day, and with a knowledge of all the criminal arts by which it must

* The Author of these letters has been informed, from very good authority, that there are Merchants at the Port of Hull *only now preparing to embark in the Trade.*

necessarily

necessarily be conducted, are *only preparing* to engage in it?---yet, this is a fact! Surely, Sir, the Spirit of Commerce cannot be so very careless of the means by which its object is to be obtained---or look to the eventual profit as the salvo for every act of injustice in Conduct and Contrivance.

But, Sir, it is not in America alone that the practice of holding Slaves is found to promote habits of idleness, and to destroy the activity and energy of the White People---for the same bad consequences became some time since so apparent at Lisbon, from the too great number of Black Slaves employed in that Capital, that by a public ordinance the further admission of them was absolutely prohibited. In France too they are very cautious of permitting Blacks to enter into the Kingdom, and there are particular laws to restrain the French West India Gentlemen from bringing over with them any of their Black domestics. In this country the frequent and unrestrained custom of bringing Negroes from the Islands has been justly complained of as a *grievance---it has, however, SIR, and to your honour be it recorded, by your own zealous and unremitting endeavours been made the occasion of GOOD in the event of the trial of the Negroe, SOMERSET: the maxim of the English Law is now established---“That a SLAVE the moment he enters this country becomes absolutely FREE.”

If proof were wanting to establish the truth that Slavery enfeebles and debases the mind, we need not scruple to refer for it to this cautious policy of the most enlightened nations of Europe; which has provided, as in the case of France and Portugal, that Black Slaves be not admitted; or has established, as in England, that they instantly become FREE.

A F R I C A N U S.

* Government has endeavoured to provide a remedy against this evil of suffering great numbers of Blacks to be at large in London, and employed there, by providing, at a large expence, vessels properly fitted out, and under proper regulations, for carrying away all who were willing, to form a settlement at Sierra Leona—Three hundred of these Black adventurers have received every encouragement possible, and as a first step to their personal security in Africa, they have been all registered as FREE MEN, under the protection of the English Government, and have individually received a certificate of such their freedom, signed by the first Lord of the Admiralty.

L E T T E R

LETTER THE TENTH.

S I R,

THE Letters of AFRICANUS on the SLAVE TRADE having accidentally fallen in my way, I think I cannot better express my warm approbation of the scheme which he has undertaken to support, and my sanguine wishes for its success, than by communicating to the public, through the * same channel which that writer has chosen, a few observations on the same subject.

To investigate this detested commerce, in all its various sources of abuse---to trace it through all its different branches of barbarity---is a labour which I am under no necessity to perform; as it has been already in a great measure effected, and will, I trust, be pursued to its completion, by the indefatigable and praiseworthy exertions of AFRICANUS.

What particularly induces me to address you, is an observation which fell from his pen in one of his late letters; and which the nature of his plan will not admit of his turning aside to examine and enforce, with the attention and spirit which it deserves.---He has been informed, "*that even now, at this advanced period, there is a set of merchants PREPARING to embark themselves in this abominable traffic.*"

It is not, perhaps, to be wondered, that a trade from which they promised themselves many and great advantages, and the

* See the Advertisement Page.

horrors of which were not yet fully disclosed, should, at an earlier period, have attracted the attention of a few interested individuals; that in contemplating the supposed advantages of it, they should have overlooked its possible injustice; so long as those advantages might have been swelled beyond their real bulk by the uncertainty through which they were viewed; so long as the extent of that injustice was not ascertained by experience. And to these causes I would willingly refer the origin of the SLAVE TRADE. I am willing to believe, that they who first engaged in it might not have been aware of all the horrid circumstances attendant on its prosecution;---they might have deceived themselves by specious pretences;---they might have fancifully connected, with the pursuit of their own interests, the glory of their country, and the advancement of Christianity. By such arguments as these they might even have persuaded *themselves* into a belief of their good intentions, and have become the willing dupes of their own fallacious reasonings. These ideas might have been suffered insensibly to wear off;---they might have been gradually led away through a maze of fraud, oppression, and cruelty, which they originally intended not to pursue;---and they might not possibly have become quite convinced of the flagrant wickedness of the commerce which they carried on, till they had brought it through every step of injustice and barbarity, to its present lowest depth of depravation.

These motives I will suppose it possible to have in some measure influenced the conduct of the first founders of the SLAVE TRADE. But, that now---when the perceptions of all mankind are opened to the scenes of carnage and devastation, which have, in all its stages, marked the progress of this shocking traffic;---now---when the Nations of Europe recoil with horror at the recollection of those barbarities which they have for a course of years been blindly practising;---that there should now be found a set of men, so abandoned to the impulses of their interest, so dead to every feeling of humanity, as to plunge with open eyes into that sea of blood, into which their predecessors advanced step by step; and from which even of them many are now struggling to emerge;---it is not to be heard without astonishment and abhorrence!

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And

And on what grounds do they now defend such detestable practices? with what pretensions to justice do they mark out the unhappy Africans, as the objects of licensed persecution?—"They are not Christians." God of Heaven! which is the more unworthy the name of Christian—the rude African, whose ignorance is misconstrued into disbelief, or the polished European, who wilfully apostatizes from the precepts which he professes, who knows no religion but the love of gain, and whose interest is the only god of his idolization?—"But they are cannibals"--- Ridiculous pretence!---Were their crimes as notorious as their wrongs; were their vices as complicated as their calamities; all would be insufficient to justify the hellish commerce in which these arguers are now preparing to engage.---Besides, they would do well to consider, that the world has long ago seen through the flimsy excuses behind which the original institutors of the trade entrenched themselves. And it is to me astonishing, that, though they may have divested themselves of their respect for every law, human and divine, they do not still retain too much regard for their reputation of worldly wisdom, to attempt the defence of practices so atrociously wicked, by arguments so palpably ridiculous.

Could I paint that mixture of feelings, with which the mind at once despises and detests; could I reconcile the most violent abhorrence with the most rooted contempt; I am persuaded it would but ill describe the passions excited in the breast of every honest individual, and of the whole nation at large, on contemplating the plodding trader; who, in the calmness of the counting-house, sits coolly down to calculate his gains on the lives of his fellow-creatures; who balances the groans of enslaved multitudes with a sugar-cane; and weighs a paltry profit against the tortures of wretched Africans, writhing under every agony which ingenious cruelty can devise, or the wantonness of uncontrolled power inflict; ---while to secure himself in the most flagrant violation of English principles, he skulks under the protection of English commerce. How is that name profaned!---The spirit of English commerce is open, liberal, ingenuous; but when perverted by the conduct of flagitious individuals, it becomes the instrument of the most enormous crimes; when the
peacefulness

peacefulness of its original disposition is made to break out into such violence of outrage, such furious thirst of blood, as even the savageness of war would blush at, it is no longer the commerce of Englishmen, of Christians, or of Men.

Can it be, that there are hearts so hardened by a course of cruelty and injustice, whose every feeling is so blunted by their interest, as to laugh at the pleadings of pity; to hear without a sigh of the massacre of unoffending thousands, the devastation of defenceless countries, and to contemplate with devilish satisfaction the ruin which they have made?---Against such all argument must be employed in vain: their own consciences be their monitors!---But there are others, with whom something may perhaps yet be done.---You, who are even now hesitating in the first step of your enterprize; You, who are not yet determinately embarked in this accursed traffic, pause for a moment;---and look round on the scenes in which you are hastening to be partakers; contemplate the complicated horrors in which you are about to be entangled; and, as you value your peace of mind---as you respect the credit of the laws---the religion of England; consider well, ere you are engaged too far to retract, how you will bear on your heads the blood of thousands; how you will bear the reflection of having entailed on yourselves and on your country---the cries of persecuted innocence, and the curses of desolated nations!

PHILO - AFRICANUS.

Africanus's best thanks are justly due to the Author of this very animated and sensible letter.

LETTER THE ELEVENTH.

SIR,

AS vessels are generally built with some regard to the object and purpose of their voyage, so it is to be supposed that Guinea-ships partake in common with others of this peculiar effort of skill; they are accordingly subdivided into several apartments of various dimensions, calculated, however, to receive only one-third women of the Negroes designed to be purchased: to these apartments in many ships there is a platform added between decks, which may enable Captains when they meet with a favourable market and rapid purchase, to take a greater number of Negroes on board than without some such contrivance could well be received; all these subdivisions are so managed as to prevent, as far as possible, the danger of insurrections, or to facilitate the power of repressing them. In these several apartments, and on this platform, the Negroes are handcuffed and distributed, and those in one place of confinement have no communication with any others in the vessel---so far all is cautious, and excepting the platform, perhaps proper; and were the number of Slaves proportioned to the size of the several divisions, the hazards and hardships of Negroes in their passage from Africa to the West-Indies might be compared perhaps with other sea-faring difficulties, and be considered as one bad consequence of a bad Traffic: but it is the misfortune, Sir, of this Trade, that it is marked at every step in its progress with peculiar and characteristic instances of cruelty: the moment a European gets a Negroe in exchange for his money or goods, he considers him not in the light of a human creature, but of a brute, whom he is to transport across the Atlantic, and sell to the best advantage--he therefore crowds his vessel with them, determined to make them feed and be peaceable, and perfectly careless of any other consideration---if they have any diseases, the Guinea-surgeons are bound to exercise

cise their skill, not so much in attempting to ease them of pain, or effect a cure, as to patch up the disorder like a horse-jockey,* that symptoms may not appear upon them when they are exposed to sale in the West-India market, "it being no uncommon thing to see a whole parcel of men Negroes, within a few weeks after they are brought on a plantation, break out all together with the yaws,† which have been repelled by medicine, especially if they have drunk the cane liquor in the boiling house, which is very efficacious in throwing the venom out of the habit."

So little do the generality of Guinea-Captains consult the common acts, or observe the bare appearances of kindness, that the number of Slaves which they force into each of these apartments and on the platform, with nothing but the bare planks to lie down upon, is so great, that they scarce have liberty for the common motions of their bodies, and are hardly able to enjoy the trifling respite of a change of posture: in many vessels they are obliged to lie (during all the time, they are not brought up to air on the deck) stretched at full length side by side, with their arms extended over each others necks; the uneasiness of this constraint, made necessary only by the avariciousness of Captains in overloading their ships — the pain of this posture, which is increased by having their skin and flesh often entirely rubbed off from the prominent parts of the shoulders, elbows, and hips, the exhalations from their bodies, and the closeness of the air, all together, occasion the Angolars and others, who like them are submissive and peaceable, to pine and die, but render the Windward-Coast Negroes and Coromantins, who are a sturdy race of men, so impatient under this state of confinement, as to cause strong struggles among themselves, and of course occasion severe treatment from their masters, under the plea of their rebellious dispositions.

* If the situation of gentlemen of this profession is to be pitied on account of their being exposed to such degrading comparisons, what are we to say to their employers, who deliberately force them to submit to such unworthy employment?

† Long's History of Jamaica.

I have had confirmed to me, what Mr. Long here mentions, namely, that Surgeons are in general bound to, what is termed in the trade-pharse, *polish the Negroes for Market*, by taking off the yaws by the application of lunar caustic, without aiming at curing the disease.

The female Negroes indeed are kept apart from the male, and there is an appearance of propriety in this arrangement, which one might be tempted at first hearing to applaud, if concurrent circumstances did not quickly remove all causes of approbation; for though kept apart from those of their own country and complexion, they are subject to the wanton lust and unrestrained licentiousness of the crew—and it will be found on enquiry, that a voyage from the coast of Guinea across the Atlantic, can exhibit scenes of debauchery, which the most glaring histories of Negroe customs will hardly surpass*—the diseases which are contracted by the sailors from this promiscuous intercourse are such as help to lessen their numbers considerably; and with regard to those who do not absolutely fall victims to them, their habits of body are so notoriously corrupted, and made liable to putrid disorders, that, even in cases of necessity, Men of War † have been prohibited from pressing the sailors of a Guinea-trader, for fear of the contagion which the crew of a single Guinea-ship might spread through a whole Fleet.

The diet of the Negroes on board is a sort of pulp, composed of rice and horse-beans, with yams, boiled and thickened to a proper consistency, which is called a Dab-a-Dab, sometimes with meat in it; to this there is added a sauce, called slabber-

* Where however such extensive licentiousness is not permitted, the Captain and Officers still indulge their desires unrestrained, and the common sailors are allowed to take for the voyage any female Negro whose consent they can obtain, upon allowing her to partake of his allowance of provisions, a considerable saving being by this measure made in the ship's stores; a desirable object to the Proprietors and Captains; instances have occurred of Negroe women, when being separated by sale from the sailors who cohabited with them, destroying themselves, and sometimes jumping overboard, on the attempt to force them from the ship, which affords no inconsiderable proof of Negroes being no less susceptible of affection than Europeans.

† From the year 1740 to 1744, it was given out in orders by Admiral Vernon and Sir Chaloner Ogle, that no sailor should be pressed from any Guinea ship, for fear of infecting the squadron in the West Indies: the reason of this order was, that Admiral Vernon had had his ship's crew infected by pressing Guinea sailors, when he first went out in 1739. Captains in his Majesty's service have not however generally, I understand, persevered in this system, but have occasionally pressed from Guinea ships. One gentleman informed me that of five seamen he had taken last war, from a Guinea ship, of the best he could find, three continued under his surgeon's care for two months, and were then on complaint from his crew of their offensiveness, put on shore for one of the islands, and sent to the hospital; from whence they were after all obliged to be invalided home to England.

sauce

sauce by the sailors, made of palm oil, mixed with flower and pepper; and there is an overseer with a † cat of nine tails to force those to eat who are sullen and might refuse; an attempt to starve themselves being considered as the greatest possible crime, and receiving the severest punishment. This food is accounted more salutary, and nearer to their accustomed way of feeding than salt flesh. Now observe, Sir, the peculiarity of this conduct, after what has been asserted of the diet of the Negroes in their own country: the mode of justifying the Slave Trade has been, to maintain that all Negroes are Cannibals; and the mode of feeding them after they are made slaves is, to keep them on a vegetable diet, because it is most salutary, and approaches nearest to their accustomed way of feeding. Which will you give most credit to, Sir, in this case, the assertions or the practice of Europeans?

It will probably not surprize you, after such a history of an African Voyage, (which I have collected from the relations of persons who have been on board Guinea ships) to hear that numbers perish ere they arrive at their destined place of sale. The merchants themselves, when they calculate their profits and losses on the Trade, are accused of allowing for the loss of one-fourth of the Slave Cargo; so that it will not appear wide of the truth to be told, that such their calculation is on the secure side at least, for that of the one hundred thousand Negroes, which are found to be exported by Europeans from Africa. one-fifth only are stated to perish on board of ship, during the stay on the Coast, and in the middle passage.

To say that all Guinea-Captains are equally merciless, would be perhaps an extravagant assertion; doubtless, amongst such numbers as are employed in this infamous Traffic, there have been found men of humanity enough to wish to attempt softening the necessary rigour on board. It is not, however, from the cruel conduct of a few individuals merely that I draw my conclusions, but from the general cruelty of the system which is known to prevail, † and which destroys Negroes in such abun-

† The cat is also of great service to make the Negroes take exercise, when on deck, by obliging them to move briskly to the sound of a drum.

† It has been observed, that the ships in the trade are fitted out to receive not above one-third women in proportion to the whole cargo: this will appear from the following dimensions of the ship Gregson, which was fitted out for 550 negroes, but took

dance, in spite of every occasional effort by ventilators, or other means, to preserve a sufficient number of them alive across the Atlantic, which is in truth all that either Merchants or Captains concern themselves in attempting.

But, Sir, these are not all the destructive consequences which accompany the Slave Trade; the loss of lives which it occasions is not confined to Negroes alone, but includes a greater number annually of English Sailors than is commonly imagined: this consideration may perhaps bring the matter nearer home, and help to impress in some degree the minds of those, who are careless of the miseries of Blacks; and give no ear to any calamities but those which their own countrymen experience. It is well known at Bristol and Liverpool how difficult a task it is to procure sailors for a Guinea voyage, and how many arts are practised to inveigle them into so disagreeable and dangerous a Trade. One method adopted is as follows: There are at Bristol several houses where sailors are permitted, and even encouraged to run into debt, and when it is imagined that they are so far involved as to be unable to pay, they are immediately arrested and thrown into prison. In this situation the Guinea-Captain, or one of his officers, is first supposed to see them; he appears to pity their distress, and proposes paying their debts on condition of their going to Guinea with him. Possibly some such other equally

took in 700 at Bonny; it measured, according to Liverpool custom, 235 tons; its width across the beam is 25 feet; its length between decks is 92 feet, divided into four rooms, and there were platforms between decks, from 8 to 9 feet in breadth.

1 Store room, in which no Negroes are put — — 15 feet

2 Negroes rooms,	{	Mens room, about	—	—	45 feet
		Womens do.	—	—	10 feet
		Boys do.	—	—	22 feet

77

The Negroes were so crowded, it seems, in this ship, as to be obliged to lie even upon one another, which occasioned such a mortality, that without meeting with unusual bad weather, or having a longer voyage than common, she lost, as I have been informed, nearly one half of her cargo. Another ship fitted out for 500 Negroes, and which could procure only 380, lost some few more than 100 e'er she crossed the Atlantic in about the usual space of time; both these instances happened very lately.

just

just arts as these may be employed in other places, in aid of the common methods of procuring seamen. It is not, I fancy, generally known, that the policy of Guinea-Captains is to bring back as few as possible of the men they carry out with them; the nature of the Slave Trade certainly requires a fuller complement of seamen than ships of equal burthen employed in other branches of commerce; nay, the Guinea-ships themselves do not require near so many hands to navigate them, when they have delivered their Slaves and are returning home, as while they continue on the African coast, and are on their way to the West-Indies. Now, it seems, that the pay of the sailors cannot be claimed, unless they go the whole voyage out and home again; and the wages of all absentees go into the Merchants' pockets, who thus gain a profit on the diminution of the crews of the vessels employed by them: in consequence of this inhuman policy, Captains of Guinea-ships are frequently obliged, in order to supply the losses of their crew by deaths, by desertions,* or by being discharged as incapable of future service, to hire seamen in the West-Indies, who engage for a stipulated sum for the run to England.

The dangers of the seas, and the † risks on the coast of Africa from climate and other accidents, are sufficient excuses to stop all inquiries which might be made after those who are missing: ‡ the cruel treatment they too, as well as Negroes, receive from

* The peculiar hardships attendant on this Trade, arising from the cruelties which the sailors experience, urge many hundreds annually to desert in the West-Indies, and some even on the Coast of Africa: it may be almost needless to observe, that of the considerable number who desert yearly in the West-Indies, few in comparison ever return to their native country; the most part dying in the Islands, and the survivors chiefly shipping themselves for America: but the loss of English Sailors, as well as Negroes, will (it is expected) be investigated and submitted, ere long, to the consideration of Parliament.

† The necessity for so much boating, as takes place on the Windward Coast, is very destructive to seamen, by exposing them for weeks together, sometimes without any covering but a tarpawling, to the parching sun and heavy dews, while they are in quest of Negroes up the rivers and along the shores: the mortality from this service has been known to be so great, as not to leave sufficient number of hands to navigate the vessels to the West Indies. A ship belonging to Mills Baber and Co. was seen sometime in the year 1786 at Cape Momerado on the Windward Coast, which had lost all her crew, except three, chiefly from boating.

‡ Few young mariners are brought up in the trade; those who are employed in it are the flower of the British seamen; and whatever advantage it may promise in

their Officers, is little known ; and the consequent loss of sailors to this country from all these causes, will perhaps be more readily credited some time hence, when it shall be shewn, by pretty good authority, that it amounts annually to near two thousand sailors.

Nay further—such is the dangerous nature of the Slave Trade, that the generality of the Captains of the vessels employed in it think themselves fortunate in escaping with life and health after four voyages ; and indeed it is no great wonder that a Trade, which thus in its principle and constitution sets every man concerned in it against his fellow, should be attended with its own peculiar risks, and have to contend with dangers of its own creating.

AFRICANUS.

LETTER THE TWELFTH.

S I R,

WHEN the Guinea ships have completed their voyages, and cast anchor at the ports where their cargoes are to be delivered, the wretched Negroes are released from their close confinement on board, and carried to the Slave Market bound two and two, to be there exposed to public sale. Here they are again subject to the same sort of examination, conducted in the same brutal manner, which has been already described on their departure from the coast of Africa. That parents and children, husbands and wives, should now be separated from each other, is a circumstance about which Slave Merchants give themselves no great concern ; the material considerations with them are

affording them employment, is more than counterbalanced by the loss of useful hands to the community ; for so tedious is the voyage, so bad the treatment and accommodations, so many are the diseases to which they are exposed from the necessity of sleeping on deck, from the number of human beings that are crowded within the ship, and other circumstances, that seldom more than two-thirds of the crew return : Out of 30 apprentices in one ship, in six years 20 died. Gregory's Essays, p. 330.

strength

strength of body and pliability of limbs; it is animal force which marks a good purchase; it is a constitution which hard labour cannot speedily subdue, and a mind which severity cannot easily depress. But the inhabitants of the West-Indies sometimes pay dear for these accomplishments, as those of Jamaica in particular have experienced to their cost, in the various rebellions and frequent massacres which the undaunted and sturdy race of the Coromantine and Windward-coast Negroes have been able to excite, and at times have carried into fatal execution.

Frequently as soon as the sickly Slaves are disposed of to those who will risk the purchase of them, an equal price is put on all the healthy Negroes, who are then sold in a lump by what is called the SCRAMBLE, that is, "they are shut up in the Merchant's house, or in an area adjoining, and at the beat of a drum, or some other signal, all who intend to become purchasers rush on suddenly, or, to use a military phrase, dash upon the astonished and frightened Negroes, and endeavour to get hold of, or encircle in a cord, as many of them as they can. Although the Negroes are * *generally* prepared for this by being pre-informed of what is to happen, yet some women and children have been known to expire from excess of terror, which is incited by a scene of such confusion and uproar: nor is it uncommon for the purchasers themselves to go by the ears, and quarrel about the objects of their choice."

I have given you the account of this diabolical business in the very words of a writer who has published an Apology for Negroe Slavery: to find such a relation prefaced with a simple opinion of the author's, "that it ought to be abolished, as being repugnant to decency, and IN SOME MEASURE to humanity," really excites an indignation, which the justice he afterwards seems to think it necessary to do to Guinea Captains, is not able to remove.

Having thus, Sir, traced the Negroe Slaves from their departure out of their native country, to the period of their captivity in the West-Indies, you will permit me to suspend my narrative for a short time, and bring forward a few principal circumstances into one point of view.

* Sales by the Scramble are, it seems, not less frequent than formerly, nor are the Negroes generally prepared for what is to happen.

When the Planters have completed their purchases, the miseries of the Negroe Slaves are in general supposed to begin. Good God, Sir, how little are the calamities which they are doomed to suffer, ere their miseries are supposed only to have beginning, either known or understood in this part of the world! Already, ere this period, have they been seized by violence, or betrayed by treachery, and forced, bound in fetters, to the nearest coast; already have they been imprisoned there with a promiscuous herd of both sexes and of all ages; already have numbers of them been branded in the breast with a hot iron; have all been forced on board the Slave ships, and subjected, during a long voyage, to the wanton cruelty of their temporary tyrants; already have they been a second time exposed in the market, and sold separate from their families, or in a lump by the SCRAMBLE; yet these things are not taken into the account of Negroe Sufferings, nor considered as causes of the various evils which ensue. Is it any wonder, Sir, that sulkiness should be the general characteristic of newly purchased Negroes? Or, perhaps, "they still must be called wild and savage, and their untractable and ferocious tempers must provoke their masters to rule with a rod of iron over a set of beings who have no pretension, it seems, to claim kindred with the human race, except in the shape of their bodies, and their walking on two legs instead of four." The * lash therefore is ever at hand, and the constant application of it is found doubtless equal to the double power of subduing the spirit of the turbulent, and of rousing the activity of the indolent and infirm.

In former times it is certain, that Planters had such contempt for Negroes, that they thought it no greater crime to kill a Slave, than to knock a monkey on the head. I do not say that it is altogether so bad now—but I do say, that even now, their burthen is greater than they can bear; that numbers by their own

* The Cowskin, which is in common use, is a durable cart-whip, composed of the tapered slips of cow or buffalo hide, twisted to a point; to which is added, such a lash as the tormentors may think best fitted for what they in a facetious tone have been heard to term *cutting up the Black Birds*: this formidable weapon is never out of the hands of the overseer, who applies it on every occasion; we may therefore conjecture what severity attends PUNISHMENTS FOR CRIMES, when such an instrument is made the play-thing of authority, and its application the occasion of a joke.

hands

hands put a speedy end to their existence ; that still greater numbers perish by hard labour to which there is no end, and by severities for which there is no cure. What shall we say, when we find it admitted, that the Colony laws most favourable to humanity, are difficult to be got at ; that they have never been printed, and remain only on record in the public offices of the islands where they were respectively enacted ?—What, if the death of a Slave be still in *some* places, to be compensated for fifteen pounds ; and in *all* so little regarded, that the utmost research of the advocates of the Slavery in the West-Indies, has not been able to produce above three or four instances of Planters having been called to account, and still fewer of them having been punished, for the murder of a Negroe ? Nay, it is only at St. Christopher's that the mutilation of a Slave is punishable by a positive law, * which was passed doubtless for good reasons, though at no earlier a period than four years ago—yet the Slave Trade has flourished for above two centuries.

I profess to you, Sir, that in the course of the observations which may be made on the treatment of the Negroes in the West-Indies, there is no particular intention of depreciating the West-India Planters ; the habits of command to which they are accustomed, and the arbitrary state of society in which they live, are circumstances that operate very powerfully on their conduct : the cruelty therefore with which Negroes are treated in general, may be attributed to the laws and policy of the country, as well as to the conduct of individuals ; for by permitting the wanton

* Who would expect to find DISMEMBERING among the punishments of the Code Noir belonging to Jamaica ? Yet there it stands—and Fugitives used to be punished by the amputation of their toes, till it was wisely discovered that this punishment affected the interest of those who inflicted it : within these thirty years no less than two Chief Judges in a certain Colony have been celebrated for cutting off or mashing the limbs of their Slaves, so as to render amputation necessary. In one case a surgeon was called in to operate ; but he answered, he was not obliged to be the instrument of another man's cruelty. His honour had it then performed by a cooper's adze, and the wretch was left to bleed to death, without attention, or dressing. When he became convulsed, in the agonies of death, the surgeon was again hastily sent for, and came in time to pronounce him dead. People stared at the recital, but made no enquiry for blood. In the other case the limb was mashed with a sledge hammer, and then it was amputated by a surgeon, and the maimed wretch lived some years.—Shame on this savage principle of Colonial Laws !—Shame on impunity which attends the perpetration of such cruelty !

exercise

exercise of cruelty, they encourage the practice of it. It is the nature of man ever to usurp power over his fellows: much evil may therefore be supposed to ensue from the bad use of it when it is certainly considered as no usurpation, because there are no civil restraints against it—more especially when these unhappy objects of legal slavery are publickly registered as unprotected, by being legally degraded from the rank and consideration of human beings.

We read with some contempt of times not long since past, when the nonsensical practice of witchcraft was considered as a felony capable of legal proof, and punishable with death by the laws of England: at some future and more enlightened period, posterity may perhaps look back with indignation to the proceedings of the present commercial age, when they see that an English act of parliament, because it seemed the interests of some merchants, has not hesitated to bring down the human species who inhabit considerable parts of one quarter of the globe,* to a level with the goods, the chattels, and the beasts of burthen of their own dominions.

Sir, it is the aggregate sum of misery, which, being not provided against by the laws, is found to prevail wherever Slavery is encouraged, that is wished to be held forth to public attention; facts therefore, which serve to prove the magnitude and extent of such misery, are but necessary appendages to a history of this kind: if therefore what has been done in the Slave Trade be admitted to be indefensible, in principle and in practice, what continues to be done will not be found, on enquiry, to be much less so: humanity has most undoubtedly not kept pace with improvements in manners, or with increase of commerce; nor have those nice and equitable distinctions, which mark the prudence and the wisdom of the English code of laws, been permitted to extend their influence and authority in favour of the unhappy race of African Negroes.

There are undoubtedly examples to be found of the good treatment of the Negroe Slaves, and it were to be wished they were

* In the Islands Slaves are much below the level of beasts of burthen: for it is impossible (says an eye-witness) to palliate by words, the oppressive manner by which cattle are hand-fed by them. Ramsay.

more numerous; because in general good treatment of them has met its reward: Why therefore might not the good, which is thus partially distributed by individuals, be generally provided for by public regulations? Let but the laws cease to consider Negroes as brutes, and protect them as men, subject indeed to the authority, but not to the unrestrained power of their masters, and a gradual cessation of cruelty may be reasonably looked for as the natural consequence: Let the good policy of the Spaniards* be a subject of our imitation as well as the bad; and as a step towards so salutary a purpose, as giving legal security to thousands who toil and perish for our enjoyments, let us look forward with well-grounded hope that the Parliament of Great Britain will not think it beneath their dignity or their wisdom to take again into their consideration, among other matters, the principle on which the act of the 5th of George II. chap. 7th, and other acts, were enacted; which declare Negroe Slaves to be mere articles of merchandise; and which may therefore be considered as one great cause of the oppression which is thus justified in its practice, and which is found to prevail in every stage of this horrid Traffic in the Human Species.

A F R I C A N U S.

* The following Regulations are adopted by the Spaniards at the Havanna and some other Places, for the gradual Enfranchisement of Slaves.

As soon as a Slave is landed, his name, price, &c. are registered in a public register; and the master is obliged, by law, to allow him one working day in every week to himself, besides Sunday; so that if the Slave chooses to work for his master on that day, he receives the wages of a free man for it, and whatever he gains by his labour on that day, is so secured to him by law, that the master cannot deprive him of it. This is certainly a considerable step towards abolishing absolute Slavery. As soon as the Slave is able to purchase another working day, the master is obliged to sell it to him at a proportionable price, viz. one-fifth part of his original cost, and so likewise the remaining four days at the same rate, when the Slave is able to redeem them, after which he is absolutely free. This is such an encouragement to industry, that even the most indolent are tempted to exert themselves.

I shall

I shall be pardoned, I hope, for taking the liberty of inserting the following EPILOGUE to "The PADLOCK," which was written by a very worthy CLERGYMAN, soon after the first representation of that Opera. The Author died in the summer of 1786.

MUNGO speaks.

THANK you, my Massas! have you laugh your fill?
Then let me speak, nor take that freedom ill.
E'en from *my* tongue some heart-felt truths may fall,
And outrag'd nature claims the care of all.
My tale, in *any* place, would force a tear,
But calls for stronger, deeper feelings here:
For whilst I tread the free-born British land;
Whilst now before me crouded Britons stand;
Vain, vain that glorious privilege to me,
I am a *slave*, where all things else are *free*.

Yet was I born, as you are, no man's slave,
An heir to all that lib'ral Nature gave;
My thoughts can reason, and my limbs can move
The same as yours; like yours my heart can love;
Alike my body food and sleep sustain;
And e'en like yours—feels pleasure, want, and pain.
One sun rolls o'er us, common skies surround;
One globe supports us, and one grave must bound.

Why then am I devoid of all to live
That manly comforts to a man can give?
To live—untaught Religion's soothing balm,
Or life's choice arts; to live—unknown the calm
Of soft domestic ease; those sweets of life,
The duteous offspring, and th' endearing wife.
To live—to property and rights unknown,
Not e'en the common benefits my own;

No

No arm to guard me from oppression's rod,
 My will subservient to a tyrant's nod.
 No gentle hand, when life is in decay,
 To sooth my pains, and charm my cares away;
 But, helpless, left to quit the horrid stage;
 Harrafs'd in youth, and desolate in age.

But I was born on Afric's tawny strand,
 And you in fair Britannia's fairer land.
 Comes Freedom then from colour? Blush with shame!
 And let strong Nature's crimson mark your blame.
 I speak to Britons—Britons, then, behold
 A man by Britons *snar'd*, and *seiz'd*, and *sold*.
 And yet no British statute damns the deed,
 Nor do the more than murd'rous villains bleed.

O sons of Freedom! equalise your laws,
 Be all consistent—plead the Negroe's cause;
 That all the nations in your code may see
 The British Negroe, like the Briton, free.
 But, should he supplicate your laws in vain,
 To break for ever this disgraceful chain,
 At least, let gentle usage so abate
 The galling terrors of its passing state,
 That he may share kind Heav'n's all-social plan;
 For tho' no Briton, Mungo is—a MAN!

I

LETTER

5

LETTER THE THIRTEENTH.

S I R,

THE treatment of the Negroe Slaves in the West-Indies has very lately been so accurately discussed by Mr. Ramsay and his antagonists, that the public may now be said to have arrived at great certainty in some points, in which, before these publications, they were compelled to hesitate between opposite opinions. This gentleman was resident near twenty years at the island of St. Christopher's, was eye-witness to most of the scenes he describes, and appears to have had no other motive for making public his Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of the African Slaves in the British Colonies, than what a conviction of their miseries, and a distant hope of thus contributing to the removal of them, naturally inspired in the breast of a benevolent man. In pursuit of this undertaking he seems to have adopted the utmost circumspection: his book, after it was finished, was, for a considerable time before its publication, submitted in manuscript to the inspection of many persons well qualified to ascertain the truth and accuracy of its contents; and it was not till after the seventh copy had been read, and its purposes approved of by many persons of worth and judgment, that he ventured to publish it as the result of twenty years experience in the West-Indies, and fourteen years particular application to the subject.

A book

A book thus prudently prepared for the public, and containing much serious matter of fact relative to the treatment of Slaves, must naturally have excited considerable attention; it has opened the eyes of the world to a system of cruelty and oppression, which has long prevailed in the Colonies, and it fully accounts for that enormous and wanton waste of human life, which Slavery, in its causes and consequences, has been found to occasion.

But if Mr. Ramsay's Essay has met with many admirers, it has not failed to produce some strong opposers; yet upon the whole it may be considered as rather advantageous to the cause of humanity at large, that it has been so opposed—disputable points have been thereby more accurately investigated; instances of a general system of arbitrary conduct towards Slaves have been more positively proved; and the calamities of their situation have been more particularly displayed: "from this collision, therefore, of opposite reasonings, many useful sparks of light and information have certainly been produced on a matter highly deserving the public attention." The parties are undoubtedly at issue on the general question of the necessity for reformation—with this difference in their zeal however, that Mr. Ramsay contends for it with heart and soul---his opposers are at last drawn, but not with equal earnestness, to a corresponding confession.

It will not be necessary nor profitable to tread over again and again the beaten path of Colonial severities, in all their particular parts. Appeals to the humanity of the public have been so frequently made, that there is danger of their losing some of their power, if too copiously obtruded upon it: for while the Slave Trade continues to be encouraged by Government, while Negroes are considered by Act of Parliament as mere commercial property, and remain unprotected from violence, there are small hopes that mere appeals to the feelings and the humanity of mankind, however justly founded, will have any material good consequence.

All parties are now willing to admit, that "neither the Slavery of the West-India Colonies, nor the Commerce of the Human Species, are to be defended, except on political grounds, and the

general practice of all the most enlightened nations ;” and that “ the general police of the Colonies stands in need of revival and amendment, particularly with respect to an additional security for the persons of Slaves, from the occasional effects of wanton violence ;” to which should also be added, FROM THE LICENSED SEVERITY OF UNINTERRUPTED OPPRESSION : for it is a melancholy truth, that “ the diet, the cloathing, the labour, and the punishment of FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND Negroes, is left totally to the discretion of their masters ;” that full play is thus given to the passions, which are enlisted, as it were, on the side of self-interest ; and that private security, wherever Slavery exists, seems almost as little thought of as public controul. Sir, African Negroes are not happy, are not content, are not at ease under the lash of their task-masters ; nor can it be expected they should, as the Laws now stand, and as Commerce is now carried on. General causes always produce general effects : good restraining statutes are by no means unnecessary parts of social happiness ; and where there is no public protection, there will be very little private security : to assert, therefore, that Negroe Slaves are in general well treated and happy, under all the calamitous circumstances which are known to oppress them, can be little short of an insult to the common sense of the public ; and is paying a forced compliment to the policy of the Colonies and of America, which loses its propriety in the extravagance of its application.

“ Some Overseers, unless sharply looked after, have been
 “ known to play the tyrant ; and where this is the case, we can-
 “ not blame their Black subjects for wishing a change, nor for
 “ their zealous endeavours to effect it. The old woman was
 “ much in the right, who prayed for the life of the tyrant Dio-
 “ nyfius, fearing that if he died, she might fall under the do-
 “ minion of a successor still more odious and diabolical. It
 “ would be an act of humanity, reflecting the highest honour
 “ on the Legislature of Jamaica, if the Gentlemen who compose
 “ it should, in imitation of the French, promulge a code of
 “ laws and ordinances respecting Negroes, more particularly in
 “ the treatment of them upon their plantations, restraining, and
 “ punishing in an exemplary manner, all secret practices of bar-
 “ barity ;

“barity; that those men, whose callous hearts are impenetrable to the feelings of human nature, may be affected in some degree by legal pains and penalties.”

Let this extract from Mr. Long's History of Jamaica speak for itself: it were sufficient that it only confirmed the justice of the foregoing sentiments; but it does more; it shews, that it could not be the cruelties of *some Overseers only*, which excited so general and benevolent a proposal.

Mr. Ramsay will have the praise of every impartial and uninterested man for his labours, which are not hastily obtruded on the public, nor written with any private view: they do not indeed lay claim to infallibility; but how he * can be thought to have merited the reproaches which have been thrown out against him, is at first sight a matter of some surprize: for on the one hand we find his general account of things confirmed by the testimony of many persons who have not acted in concert with him, or even known his intentions of publication; amongst others, by the long residence of Benezet and Wesley in America, and by the ocular proofs which Captain Smith obtained in the West-Indies: these men have fearlessly made public those severities which they all saw, and knew to be in common practice; these united accounts may be still further confirmed by numbers who have visited the countries where Slavery exists, and who can testify (if they please) “the many indelible marks which almost every half-naked Slave to be met with exhibits of the West-India discipline, exercised on his back, shoulders, and

* It is to be remarked, that this Essay, which has made a whole Colony enemies to its Author, lay for years in his parlour, open for the perusal of any body, in a more questionable shape than it at last appeared in: that numbers of various professions and callings, Managers and Proprietors, did carefully peruse it: that the Author pointed their notice to the places which he supposed most objectionable. Being able on the spot to appeal to the practice of this or that man or plantation for the truth of the things advanced, there was no place found for those violent contradictions which have arisen in his absence from its publication. The facts were acknowledged, generally were lamented, the reasoning was admitted, the purpose only was supposed distant. In short, the book is not criminal for its contents, but for its being in print: nor is the Author a bad man for having written it, but having dared to publish it.

Mr. Ramsay's Reply, Page 4.

breast,

breast, with here and there an unlucky stroke across the face and over the eyes."

Appeals to facts like these, by one who was eye-witness to them, for twenty years together, are no trifling proofs of a general spirit of oppression and cruelty; and a man of sense could hardly be supposed to stake his character and veracity on a reference which, if not just, might be contradicted by any one who had crossed the Atlantic.

On the other hand, we find the apologists for Negroe-Slavery deny the extent, rather than the existence of the evil; strive to account for such appearances from crimes which may have occasioned them; and aim at removing from the West-India Planters the obloquy which must rest upon the perpetrators of such cruelties. They have stated (and Mr. Ramsay says no less) that the new settlers from Europe, who, by purchase or otherwise have got property in the Islands, are more severe to their Slaves than the native Creoles: this is however shifting the blame, not removing the evil. They have arraigned the conduct of Governors, and the want of protection by Law, in all which Mr. Ramsay agrees with them; and they have, as a last resource, endeavoured to weaken the respectability of Mr. Ramsay's History by personal attacks; but the prudent deliberation with which his Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies has been published, does not mark it to be (as has been insinuated) "the work of an Author practised in the ways of the press;" but gives it a weight which ridicule attempts in vain to remove, and which contradiction, less prudently opposed, cannot annul.

They would attempt to prove too much, who should attempt to prove that the general state of the Negroe Slaves, unprotected as they are, is a happy one; and if such attempts should not meet with the approbation or credit expected from them, it will be because they must represent human nature in a light in which she has never been found to exist, in any part, or at any period of the world: it will be because that through fear of West-India Planters being thought less than men, they must exalt them into something more—making them confer greater happiness on *Slaves* by their own good inclination and conduct, than can be conferred
on

on *Free-Men* by the help of equal government and protecting laws: it will be because they must exhibit to the Mother Country a system of Colonial circumspection and humanity, which its own excellent regulations must be stated to have attempted in vain: nay, they must venture further, to maintain "that an English Negroe Slave in the West-Indies, under all his miserable oppressions, wants nothing but a little natural industry to make his life tolerably comfortable;" and "that the soil of England is rendered productive, only by the ceaseless drudgery of her own devoted Sons and Daughters of wretchedness."

But, Sir, the good sense of mankind is not so easily imposed on, as to look upon public protection and private security to be such trifling sources of social happiness; or to be persuaded by any sophistry, that unintermitting labour is no evil; and being subject to the constant discipline of the lash, no cause of misery and pain. Besides, Sir, if the state of the labouring poor of England be even no better than that of the Slaves in the West-Indies, (and some persons would fain persuade us it is worse) how happens it that a traffic in the human species is not found necessary to supply the deficiencies of our own population? How happens it that in the Slave Trade and in the Colonies, where Negroes are said to be so well treated, they perish without number*; and

* In the continuation of Lord Clarendon's history, we find, that in his time, the number of white inhabitants was 50,000; and of blacks, if I rightly recollect, 100,000 in the island of Barbadoes: about twenty-five years since, the numbers by actual enumeration, were of whites less than 25,000; of negroes 90,000. Now, though the number of whites has apparently diminished in a greater proportion than that of the blacks, yet it is to be observed, that the blacks are stationary, they do not migrate; the whites do: nor is the increase of the whites from new comers in a greater proportion than the number of natives that migrate or live elsewhere: besides that the climate is more in favour of the blacks than of the whites. It is now, in round numbers, a hundred years since Lord Clarendon wrote his continuation. In this space of time the whites have diminished about one half; the number of blacks have lessened in the proportion of nine to ten, notwithstanding the yearly importation of 5000, as I have heard: but stating it only at 4000, or even 3000, that would prove the original stock of blacks to have been lost just so many times over, i. e. five, four, or three, in the space of a century, besides the diminution from 100,000 to 90,000; so that while the whites, in a climate less favourable to them, have lost only one half of their original stock, the blacks have lost it four or five times over. How near all these particulars are to the precise fact, I have not the means of ascertaining; but in a general view, I believe they are sufficiently near to shew that the blacks in our islands are diminished through mal-treatment, in a proportion, which were it to prevail equally in all countries, in a century would depopulate the globe. Rev. R. B. NICKOLLS' Letter on the Slave Trade.

at home, where the treatment is represented as so severe, our peasantry have increased in such proportion, as to render the waste even of an American war scarcely now to be perceived?

In opposition then to the partial opinions of men interested in the subject, it may with candour be asserted, that the success of the Slave Trade is an indelible stigma on Colonial Humanity: for that how warmly soever its advocates may take up the cause, they will not be able to controvert the position, that that Power *must* be generally abused which occasions such a Waste of Human Life; and that that Slavery *must* be excessive, for the continued existence of which THE SLAVE TRADE is asserted to be absolutely necessary.

AFRICANUS.

LETTER THE FOURTEENTH.

SIR,

THOUGH the mind of every thinking man naturally revolts against a spirit of oppression, wherever it is found, yet even the State of the Slaves in the West-Indies and America, bad as it certainly is, does not raise such indignation as the Traffic in them; which certainly adds very considerably to the calamities that Slavery of itself occasions: for it may be argued with great propriety, that the interest which Planters have in preserving the health and strength of their Negroes, is weakened by their power of providing themselves with fresh recruits in the markets; and that * Overseers become less solicitous about the

* The great cause of the loss of lives among Negroes is, that the character of the managers, and their very continuance in office, depends on the great crops of sugar which they can make the plantations produce—many flourishing plantations have been known to have been ruined by this impolitic system—for great and extraordinary crops of sugar are procured but too often at the expense of the loss of the greatest and most valuable part of the Negroes; less corn, and fewer grounds of

consequence of over-working and ill-treating Slaves, when they know that others may be purchased, than if there were no such frequent opportunity of repairing their losses. A proof that this reasoning is not so inconclusive as may at first sight be imagined, is the effect which the American War had upon the Slave Trade; for when among other difficulties which it occasioned to the commerce of this country, it gave some check also to the spirit of this traffic: the consequence was, that West-India Planters began, by a sort of common consent, to see their real interest in treating their Slaves with less severity, and in granting greater indulgencies to the women and children in particular; that so they might supply the scarcity of newly-imported Africans, by encouraging population among the Negroes already in their possession: the beneficial effects of such attempts have been already experienced by many Planters.

This, Sir, is a matter of fact which becomes of more importance from the truth it seems to establish, that THE SLAVE TRADE may not be so essentially necessary to the labour and produce of the West-India Colonies, as has been commonly taken for granted. If, therefore, the accidents of * War have suggested to the inhabitants of the Islands the politic idea of encouraging their slaves to bring up their children born in slavery, surely it may deservedly in time of Peace be made to occupy the wisdom of the Mother Country, how best to improve this newly-acquired consideration; how best to give method and legal stability to a plan, which promises to secure the Colonies from all apprehensions of a future scarcity of Negroes, and to encourage a milder system in the treatment of those who are Slaves already. A plan of this kind, when matured by the joint wisdom and experience of all parties concerned, will, if carried into effect, have the better prospect of becoming generally beneficial; because in its adoption, it will diminish nothing from the just authority

of provisions are also planted in consequence of this invariable rule of never neglecting the sugar cane—but if the Slave Trade were abolished, and there were no farther hopes of recruiting the gangs from Africa, these extraordinary but destructive exertions would be less frequently made; and the preservation of the lives of the native Negroes would no longer be, as it is now, a mere secondary consideration; but men would be induced to be humane and careful from interest, if not from principle. Ramsay's Essay, p. 80.

* See the Bishop of Chester's Sermon, now Bishop of London.

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which Planters should maintain over their Slaves; nor will it offer, in its execution, any violence to the established manners and customs of the Colonies.

The necessity for providing any country with such numerous and fresh supplies of Slaves as amount to an absolute and entire renovation every sixteenth year, is a circumstance which has never been known to exist any where but in America and the West-Indies: it implies such an enormous waste of human life, as nothing but the severities of Slavery could occasion.

The Island of Barbadoes, about thirty years ago, is said to have required an annual importation of 5000 Negroes to keep up the proper stock of hands for working the plantations, which stock amounted to eighty thousand Slaves: the present number of Negroes and Mulattos are put at 100,000; and the island is not now, it seems, subject, as formerly, to the insurrections of Slaves,* because many of them are born upon the island, and are thus reconciled to their state.

If we say, Sir, that about † one hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling has been averaged as the yearly loss to Jamaica by the death of Slaves, and the consequent necessity for new purchases; we shall probably be found to have taken it upon a moderate calculation---the major part of these deaths are found to be native Africans; for upon the old settled estates the number of births and deaths are stated to be pretty nearly equal. From 1764 to July 1766, only two years and an half, there were imported into Jamaica twenty-seven thousand Africans: need one be astonished after this, that neither the lives nor the property of the inhabitants have been free from the dangers of massacres and re-

* Barbadoes, of all the West-India Islands, can least afford the immense expense of an annual supply of Slaves, &c. It would be a great step towards the desirable purpose of checking Slavery, if the introduction of Slaves into the Colony was prohibited, and all acts that lay fines upon those Masters who free their Slaves were repealed.—Remarks of a Gentleman of Barbadoes, communicated to Mr. Ramsay.

† In 1761 the number of Negroes in Jamaica amounted to 146,000—in 1768 they were 166,904, so that the whole stock was augmented in seven years 20,904—the average annual import being put at 8000 Negroes, makes 56,000, from which deduct the augmentation, and there remains a dead loss of 35,096 Negroes, which is equal to 5013 per annum, and at 35 pounds sterling per head, amounts to 175,455l. annual loss in value.

bellions.

bellions. The reduction of the insurrections of the Coromantins, and the expense of making good the losses occasioned by them in the years 1760 and 1761, cost the island of Jamaica the sum of near 220,000l.---yet a Colonial bill was rejected there (which endeavoured to strike at the root of this evil, by laying a duty, after a certain time, on the importation of Coromantin Negroes, equal to a prohibition), because the conceit of a few Planters, in regard to the superior strength of this hardy race of Negroes, and their greater ability to support field labour, outweighed all considerations of public tranquillity and personal safety---the consequence of which was, that in 1766 a fresh insurrection broke out, where the Coromantins only were concerned, most of whom had been newly imported, and in the space of an hour, nineteen White persons were wounded and murdered; and the owner of the plantation would have fallen a sacrifice had he been on the estate; for they entered his dwelling-house, and hacked every thing they found in it to pieces, ere they could be defeated and taken.---Yet the importation of numbers of this particular race of Negroes continues; and the preference is still given to it, in spite of the dying words of a principal Coromantin, executed in the rebellion of 1765, who particularly cautioned the Whites “never to trust any of his countrymen.”

What are we to say to this injudicious and impolitic spirit of obstinacy in the Planters, who persist, in defiance of reason and experience, to admit these dangerous spirits among them? * Is it not probable they will from these causes justify their severities towards Slaves in general; and thus be content to be cruel on principle, rather than suffer any plan to be adopted, which might remove the necessity for such severity; and, at the same time, provide a less equivocal state of security for themselves?

It appears, Sir, that the vulgar opinion in England confounds all the Blacks in one class, and supposes them equally prompt for rebellion—it appears that this opinion is now found to be erroneous—for that the Negroes who have been chief actors in the seditions and mutinies, which at different times have broken

* The French, and some other West-India Colonies, will not knowingly admit this race of Negroes, being sensible of their dangerous tempers, and unsuitness for the peaceable work of husbandry.

out in Jamaica, were *the imported Africans*. I rejoice that this vulgar mistake is now rectified; more truths will probably appear in time, to establish the maxim of the Impolicy as well as the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade. Evils have been known by their own magnitude to work out their own cure; but is it not the duty of a good government to foresee and prevent such desperate remedies?

In considering the condition and treatment of the Slaves in the West-Indies, there is therefore a distinction to be observed between the Creole Negroes, or those who are born Slaves in the Plantations; and the African, or those who are annually imported: the former of these are, it seems, in better situations than the latter, in as much as they are born and regularly inured to that labour they are constrained to undergo; in as much as they have no change of climate, of country, and of condition, to complain of; in as much as they are considered as more tractable and less dangerous; are of course more highly valued, and are treated with proportionably less severity. Creole Negroes are universally acknowledged to be more hardy, diligent, and trusty, than imported Africans.† “ They are in general more exempt from
 “ ebriety; they hold the Africans in the utmost contempt, styling
 “ them ‘ salt-water Negroes,’ and ‘ Guinea Birds;’ they value
 “ themselves on their own pedigree, which is considered as the
 “ more honourable the farther it is removed from an African
 “ ancestor. On every well governed plantation they respect
 “ their master as a father, and partake of his consequence; *
 “ they generally love their children, though sometimes they
 “ beat them with a rigour bordering upon cruelty: they seem
 “ to feel a patriotic affection for the island which has given them
 “ birth, they rejoice at its prosperity, and they lament its losses.
 “ Whoever will be at the pains to study their dispositions and
 “ sentiments attentively, will be of opinion, that with mild and
 “ humane usage they are more likely to become the defenders
 “ than the destroyers of their country; that rash correction has

† Long’s Jamaica.

* Negroes bred to mechanic employments, to sugar boiling, and the like, and some domestic Slaves, fare much better than those who work in the fields.

“ often

“ often rendered them stubborn, negligent, and perverse; and
 “ that corporal punishment, if carried to the extreme, is sure to
 “ excite a hearty contempt for, and indelible abhorrence against
 “ the inflictor. Moreover, the fresh-imported Africans are
 “ chiefly awed into subjection by the superior multitude of Cre-
 “ ole Blacks, with whom they dare not confederate, nor solicit
 “ their concurrence in any plan of opposition to the white in-
 “ habitants.” In almost every plantation to be remarked for the
 health, spirit, and chearful labour of the Slaves, it may be ob-
 served, that they have belonged to it for a considerable time; and
 that there are very few, if any, newly imported Africans among
 them. All considerable Planters avoid as long as possible
 making any such purchases, considering the price and the risk
 of keeping them (from the necessity, they alledge, of subduing
 their stubborn spirits) as too great; nay, some Planters have
 boasted, that with the management of a thousand Negroes, for
 years, they have never purchased a newly imported Slave.

Where then, if these things be so, can be the great necessity
 of keeping up with such great exertions, and at so great expense,
 this iniquitous spirit of the SLAVE TRADE? The newly im-
 ported Africans must be managed, it seems, like beasts, must be
 tamed before they are treated like men; so they are subjected to
 the power, not only of their White Masters, but of the Creole
 Blacks also, who are suffered to impose upon their ignorance,
 without measure and without mercy, till they sink under their
 oppressions: they are confessedly (and no wonder) the stirrers
 up of massacres and rebellions; and as they lose no remembrance
 of the wrongs which they have received, they are represented as
 always meditating severe revenge for the miseries they are made
 to endure.

The great political advantages which are declared to result from
 this Traffic, consist in its furnishing the Islands with the labour
 of Slaves; but if the labour of Slaves can be gradually furnished
 them, as it certainly may, by encouraging domestic population
 for this purpose, the Slave Trade will soon be stripped of its
 borrowed ornaments, and be shortly left without a single argu-
 ment in its behalf to counterbalance the dreadful iniquity of
 which it is the occasion. No good reason has ever yet been
 given

given why population, labour, and profit, should not go hand in hand in the West-Indies, as well as in other countries ; * and it will do so when the system of severity, which destroys such multitudes, is removed ; neither can any just and final conclusion be drawn from past experience only, that the produce of the Islands may not in a short time be exported upon as beneficial terms to themselves and the Mother Country, by the strength of their own internal population, as by the present system of the SLAVE TRADE.

AFRICANUS.

* We have several Plantations, where by care and mild treatment, and a judicious or casually just proportion between the sexes at first, the Slaves increase from the births ; and this might be the case in all, if the dictates of prudence and humanity were obeyed. To give an instance in point : there are two plantations, bordering on each other, of nearly the same extent. About twenty years ago they were nearly equally stocked with Slaves : on the one the allowance has been more plentiful, and the managers have been more considerate than on the other. Here the Slaves are strong, hearty, and increased from the births. The other manager boasts of his pinching and saving : and that Plantation requires an almost annual supply of eight or ten Negroes to keep up the stock. And, till lately, that he, through laziness, and absolute neglect of his employers interest, as he understood it, has relaxed in his discipline, the Slaves were a starving heartless crew. Indeed, at this time, none were left but such whose natural strength and constitution stood proof against excess of labour, severity of punishment, and the last tolerable degree of famine. Ramsay's Essay, p. 90.

LETTER

LETTER THE FIFTEENTH.

S I R,

ONE remarkable circumstance in the history of the West-India Islands is, that of the numerous race of Negroes which the Slave Trade has introduced there: numbers taking advantage of the disputes of Europeans, have long since repelled force by force, and maintained their liberties in spite of every effort of the white inhabitants to subdue them.—Such are the Marons, who were left in Jamaica by the Spaniards, and the * Caribs of St. Vincent's. Indeed the former of these, since the treaty which was made with them by Governor Trelawney, in the year 1739, seem to have partaken with the English the possession of part of the island; they have several towns appropriated to them, are allowed to carry arms, and have their leaders appointed from among themselves, who are distinguished by a silver chain and medal inscribed with their own names; they wear cockades, are regularly commissioned by the Governors, by whom they are protected, and even courted. Local laws have been enacted in their favour, the chief restriction of which is, that they are not to purchase Slaves under a heavy penalty. Had the English not treated with the Marons, they must have extirpated them; but a juster policy than that of the sword, which had been tried in vain, has at length converted into a source of protection, what

* About the commencement of the present Century, a Guinea ship from Africa, bound to Barbadoes, was stranded on the Islands of St. Vincent's, under all the difficulties which men must suffer from such a misfortune in an almost uninhabited Island, (for St. Vincent's at that time had very few native Indians); these Africans made a settlement there, and have increased to a very considerable number—a proof that Negroes will increase in West-India climates, when they do not live and labour under circumstances which obstruct population.

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had long been the cause of perpetual alarm : since the period of the treaty, they have been found of great service in suppressing rebellions, and stopping the savage fury of partial insurrections among the Negroes. But with the privileges of West-Indian freedom, they have been taught the prejudices of West-Indian tyranny, to which they are trained in some degree by being, in peaceable times, employed in picking up runaway Slaves—their knowledge of Negroe-haunts particularly well qualifies them for this office, which they are paid for after the rate of two pounds per man, besides incidental charges.

I have given you, Sir, this short account of the Marons in Jamaica, to shew you (in opposition to the strong assertions of many advocates of Slavery) that Negroes in the West-India Islands are to be tamed, *without* being oppressed—are to be influenced by laws, and made useful to society by legal protection.

These Marons, as well as the free Blacks, and Mulattos, are found capable of increasing their numbers, and are indebted to no adventitious supply from a SLAVE TRADE to preserve them from extinction.

Should a question now arise, as it naturally may—why, since other Negroes increase their own numbers, such large supplies of *imported Africans* should be annually necessary for keeping up the working stock for the Plantations?—The truth must be told, though it affect the credit of West-Indian humanity—THEY ARE PREVENTED BY OPPRESSION FROM MULTIPLYING THEIR SPECIES. Incessant labour is all that is required at their hands; yet “ Plantation work is asserted to be in itself “ not peculiarly hard; but it is the use of *strength* instead of “ *contrivance*; it is want of food, of cloaths, of rest and sleep, “ which wearies out Slaves; it is * the drawling out their work “ from early dawn to dusky night; it is their wandering three “ or four miles under the meridian sun, to pick up bundles of

* That it is not men alone who are thus cruelly treated, will appear from the following anecdote, selected from many others, which happened in one of the Colonies:—“ A slender female, with a child at her back, was compelled to carry up a high ladder seventeen Bristol bricks each time, during the whole of a summer’s day. When her strength was exhausted she sat down, and in the bitterness of her soul burst into a flood of tears; but so little humanity existed in the breast of her task-master, that he immediately roused her to a renewal of her labour, by a severe flagellation.”

“ grafts,

“ grafts, that constitutes their hardships :” the fate of these miserable wretches is therefore not a matter of accident,* but of calculated

* The following extracts from a Letter addressed to ‘ the Treasurer of the Society instituted for the Purpose of effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade,’ from the Rev. Robert Boucher Nickolls, a native of the West-Indies, and now Dean of Middleham, in Yorkshire, corroborate so strongly the positions here laid down, that I make no scruple of inserting them.

“ I conceive, Sir, if it can be proved that the natural increase of the Negroes already in the islands would be fully adequate to the cultivation of them, and that such natural increase would be secured by humane treatment, no argument could then be brought against the abolition of this accursed traffic, but from the private interest of a few individuals, on this side of the Atlantic chiefly.

“ Though it must be from a number of facts that the above position can derive incontrovertible evidence, yet I will state one or two remarkable ones, referring you to persons in London to authenticate them in a better manner than I am able to do.

“ About seventeen or eighteen years ago, a Mr. Macmahon died upon his estate in the parish of St. George in the Island of Barbadoes. The estate was valued, as well as I can remember, at about 30,000l. neat money. Its late possessor had been in possession of it seven or eight years, but finding it incumbered with a debt to a merchant in London, he resolved to pay off this incumbrance by extraordinary exertions; in consequence of which, he destroyed the health and lives of many of his Negroes. He was therefore obliged to supply their place with others purchased from time to time during the space of seven years; till at length, upon his own demise, his estate was left precisely in the same state of incumbrance he found it; the money lost by the death of his Slaves being found equal to the original debt upon his estate.

“ Since writing the above, a gentleman of the island has assured me it was ascertained from a Negroe-levy, (or poll-tax) that in two years the number of Macmahon’s Slaves was lessened nearly one half, i. e. from 170 to 95, by his severity; and that it was his usual boast, he did not desire a newly-purchased Slave to live longer than four years, in which time he could be sufficiently repaid for the purchase.

“ Nearly about the same time, or a little before, died Dr. Mapp of the same island, a Gentleman who possessed an estate of less value than that above-mentioned, being (as I believe) but about the value of 20,000l. currency; in a situation more subject to drought, in a soil less rich, and at a greater distance from market. This Gentleman was rather the patriarch than the master among his Negroes. Of provisions they had a plentiful supply; his tenderness gave them a long respite from labour during the heat of the day, from eleven to three, and proper refreshments were added in the sultry interval without any labour of their own. Thus fostered by a fatherly care, *their increase was wonderful*. Another estate, on which there were no Negroes, was purchased, in order to receive the overflow from the original estate; which purchased estate was, I believe, of the value of 12,000l. currency. The daughter of this Gentleman had a suitable fortune, and the son inherited a clear fortune of above 40,000l.: more than double the original estate. The daughter is married to a most respectable Gentleman, of good fortune, H. A. Esq. who will,

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“ I dare

calculated certainty; † for a cruel task-master will undertake that the unremitting toil of his Slaves for FOUR YEARS shall reimburse

“ I dare say, being a person of great humanity, certify you further on a subject that does so much honour to the memory of his Lady's excellent father; for it is of importance to ascertain these particulars with minute exactness. I presume the well known house of L—— can authenticate the former relation, if it be as I heard it in the island, at the funeral of that inhuman person Macmahon. Having now no connection with the West Indies, and residing at a distance from town, my communications to you can be of little more service than pointing out the quarter from whence you may derive better information; yet I have not knowingly exaggerated any thing, or misinformed you intentionally.

“ The immediate and effectual remedy for the diminution of Slaves in the islands, would be the *entire abolition of the Slave Trade*. This would necessarily oblige the Planter to such care of his Negroes, as would at once essentially serve the cause of humanity, without giving him any occasion for the plea that his rights are infringed, or his property invaded: for surely, however he may have acquired a property of the Slaves now under his dominion, he can have none in those who are not: he can have no greater right to recruit his gang with the inhabitants of Guinea than with the inhabitants of Britain. Nor can the British Merchant be better intitled to buy or sell the inhabitants of Guinea, than the inhabitants of Guinea are to buy or sell him. Let him suppose himself at Algiers, and ask himself what he would think of his chains, or of the right that imposed them. What if it were true, that the British Merchant buys only the captives taken in war. Yet war is made in Guinea that the captives may be sold to him. It is the receiver of stolen goods that makes the thief.

“ For all the blood spilt in such wars, for all the villages set in flames by the contending parties, for all the ravages incident to war, for all the tears and sufferings of natives whose attachments are violently broken, for all the cruelties they endure in the course of their voyage, or under a rigid task-master when sold for Slaves, the Merchant is to answer. He sets up self-interest as his idol, and stabs humanity as the sacrifice to it. And shall the rest of the world sit down quietly, and suffer their common humanity to be thus injured and insulted, that the trader may eat turtle, and the daughter of the skipper of a vessel flounce in silks or muslins.”

† The Rev. J. Newton, in his *Thoughts on the Slave Trade*, has the following observation—“ One thing I cannot omit, which was told me by the Gentlemen to whom my ship was consigned at Antigua, in the year 1751, and who was himself a Planter. He said that calculations had been made, with all possible exactness, to determine which was the preferable, that is, the more saving method of managing Slaves—

“ Whether, to appoint them moderate work, plenty of provision, and such treatment, as might enable them to protract their lives to old age? Or,

“ By rigorously straining their strength to the utmost, with little relaxation, hard fare, and hard usage, to wear them out before they become useless, and unable to do service; and then, to buy new ones, to fill up their places?”

He farther said, that these skilful calculators had determined in favour of the latter mode, as much the cheaper; and that he could mention several estates, in the Island of Antigua, on which, it was seldom known, that a Slave had lived above nine years.—*Ex pede Herculem!*

him

him their prime costs and expences of maintenance—death then perhaps comes seasonably to the relief of many of them, just as their worn out bodies may have sufficed to answer this infamous calculation. Gracious Heaven! it is thus that man abuses the work of his Creator—that he makes the life and death of his fellow-creatures the sport of his passions, and the instrument of advancing his fortune in the world! SLAVERY, Sir, in all times has been found equal to the power of inverting the natural order of things; but never surely has it been attended with so much deliberate and malignant horror as in the commerce between Africa and the West India Islands.

Two hundred years have elapsed since the existence of the SLAVE TRADE; in all this long period---where do we find any mitigation of that system of cruelty which prevailed at its establishment? or where any change, except in refinements of that treachery by which it has been supported? Complaints have been made by individuals, and petitions have been presented to the throne of England against the destructive influence of this traffic; but these complaints have been silenced---these petitions have been rejected---NEAR TWENTY MILLIONS of people have fallen a sacrifice, to prove, as it were, of how little estimation is the life of man in the scale of commercial consideration. But let us hope that the evil has attained its height; that now, at length, it has caught the attention of the Nations of Europe: The Spaniards, the Portuguese, the French, have set examples which the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland may be proud to follow---America has marked * her sincere love of liberty, by extending it to those under her power, as soon as she had secured it for herself. Great Britain alone has, in a manner, authorised the severities of her subjects towards their Slaves, by withdrawing from the latter all legal protection; and by recording them LESS THAN MEN by act of parliament.

Though the support of private credit, and the wish to give the strongest security to those who lend money on West Indian estates, seems to have regulated the conduct of the Mother Country and her Colonies, in their respective legal establishments,

* The legislation of Carolina also has this year enacted a temporary law prohibiting the Importation of Slaves.

yet is it much to be regretted that this consideration has been suffered too entirely to engross their attention; and that a zeal to accomplish this favorite object should have warranted oppression, and given to Creditors, as well as Planters, legal authority for the practice of it. A law in Jamaica, called THE PRIORITY LAW, is a pointed instance of the ill consequence which the exclusive attention to this principle of strengthening private credit has occasioned. By this law a direct obligation is laid on every money lender to bring actions and obtain judgments as soon as he possibly can; and when they are obtained, it throws the debtor very much into his creditor's power; thus it forces creditors to persecute their debtors, to harass and ruin them without giving an easy mode of possessing their debts when recovered, and without discharging the debtor for so much as he has actually paid by levy on his effects. Thus detrimental, Sir, is the operation of this impolitic law to all parties concerned, except indeed the Marshal who executes the warrant, who is known to thrive by the confusion which ensues. By such proceedings the planting interest on the Island is most materially injured; plantations are suddenly brought to ruin; the mutual confidence between the merchant and planter is destroyed, and a spirit of rebellion is raised among the Negroes, who are encouraged to resist the Marshal in the exercise of his office.

But the principal object of our attention, in stating the effects of this law, is, the misery which it entails on Slaves, who are thus rendered incapable of reaping any lasting benefit, even from their own good behaviour; and under this unjust predicament, Creole Negroes, as well as imported Africans, are found to labour. Of what real advantage then to Creoles is their birth and strength? of what avail is that industry and fidelity which have been stated to be peculiar to many of them, if it be exerted in vain? where is their boasted superiority of situation over IMPORTED AFRICANS, if they too are bandied about from plantation to plantation; from master to master; and even bought to BE LET OUT FOR HIRE FOR A TIME, to Planters whose poverty will not permit them to have a gang of Negroes of their own?

Thus,

Thus, Sir, the Slave Trade within the Islands is made to assume a new, but not less scandalous, appearance—in which it is not pretended that the interest which Planters are asserted to have in preserving the lives of their Slaves, can have any existence. Slave Brokers are not likely to be less severe than Slave Traders;—and it need not surely be proved, that he who hires, because he cannot purchase Slaves, will probably not treat them with less severity on this account.

The best writers on the subject of West-Indian police have considered this, and with great reason, as among the most cruel acts of oppressive injustice to which Slaves are subject—it is indeed fulfilling English Acts of Parliament with a rigid strictness, which one would willingly suppose could not have been foreseen at the time they were passed. Men had need be looked upon as mere articles of merchandise, as beasts of burthen, to be thus dealt with! to have their punishments ascertained at all events---and their good behaviour made incapable of procuring comfort in Slavery, or prospect of release from it.

But this is not all---Contemplate, Sir, if you can without horror, the spirit which could dictate the following law of Barbadoes (329th Act, p. 125): If any man shall OF WANTONNESS, OR ONLY OF BLOODY MINDEDNESS, OR CRUEL INTENTION, WILFULLY KILL A NEGROE, OR OTHER SLAVE OF HIS OWN, he shall pay into the public treasury FIFTEEN POUNDS STERLING; but if he shall so kill another man's, he shall pay to the owner of the Negroe, *double the value*, and into the public treasury TWENTY-FIVE POUNDS STERLING; and he shall further, by the next Justice, be bound to his good behaviour during the pleasure of the Governor and Council, AND NOT BE LIABLE TO ANY OTHER PUNISHMENT OR FORFEITURE FOR THE SAME.

Is it possible to conceive more consummate wickedness than such an ordinance must occasion? or can history be made to furnish so dreadful an example of man's being encouraged by law to indulge his passions, and embroe his hands in blood? Yet such, in modern times, is the law of man--so publickly dares he record his contempt of those awful words of his Maker

Maker---WHOSO SHEDDETH MAN'S BLOOD, BY MAN SHALL HIS BLOOD BE SHED.

If we look back with pity on the desolations which the barbarous spirit of the dark ages, or the bigoted zeal of the crusades, have brought to pass---with what emotions must we view the wanton and authorised destruction which the Spirit of Commerce has poured out on the devoted race of Negroes? But what has the Spirit of such Commerce to do with the sufferings of individuals? IT seldom shews itself to the public eye, but in the dazzling robes of opulence and power; the tattered rags of misery and want are trodden under foot; we bow with reverence to the **GOLDEN IMAGE**, and forget that the life of millions has been sacrificed to its establishment.

A F R I C A N U S.

LETTER THE SIXTEENTH.

S I R,

I NOW at length address you for the last time, and I retire from my subject with the greater satisfaction, in the well grounded hope of seeing it ere long seriously and maturely discussed in its proper place. Be the event of that discussion what it

it may, I shall at least have the pleasure of reflecting, that I have exerted myself in a good cause; that I have endeavoured, with others, to open the eyes of my countrymen to a sense of the inhumanity and impolicy of the SLAVE TRADE; and to the propriety of its being made a matter of Parliamentary Investigation. There is doubtless some little advantage gained, in having the magnitude of such an evil made generally publick; in having the fact, that it brings misery and destruction on so many thousands of the human species, established beyond the power of contradiction. There is something like an approach towards a remedy, when Englishmen can be brought to set themselves in earnest against such practices; when the veil of ignorance and prejudice is removed; and when every Trader in Slaves can be made to know that the murder of a Negroe is not innocent, though the Legislature have not declared it felonious; for that the laws of Nature and of Nations do respect, as Human Beings, those to whom an English Act of Parliament has denied the privileges of humanity and protection.

The Evils, Sir, which mankind have laboured under, at different periods of the world, may be traced to their sources in the prevailing passions of the times; but the enlightened minds of the Moderns have shewn peculiar dexterity in extending the empire of the passions with the opportunity of exerting them: they exterminate a new world almost as soon as discovered, and contrive to repeople it by a SLAVE TRADE with the old; they check the natural sources of population, and invent new ones; and they scruple not to add to the ordinary calamities of life, peculiar miseries of their own creation.

AMBITION, REVENGE, RAPINE, are the vices of daring spirits; they carry something awful in their turbulence, and prepare us for their consequences---But we view with abhorrence and contempt the pusillanimous spirit of INTEREST attempting to rival the bolder passions in villainy; shewing itself more deliberate in the contrivance, and more persevering in the execution of crimes. To modern ages therefore we must resort for the picture of Men in a private and humble sphere of life, possessed of the uncontrouled power of doing mischief: in these our days are to be found Merchants professing themselves Christians,

Christians, making * pretensions to integrity in their conduct, in the bosom of society, in the calm hours of domestic peace, who can prepare materials for exciting civil wars in a distant country ; in full possession of personal liberty, who can forge chains for others ; and enjoying perfect legal protection themselves, who can spread their canvass to ensnare thousands of their fellow-creatures, and consign them without remorse to slavery and despair.

* The Rev. J. Newton, in his Thoughts on the African Slave-Trade, concerning the Natives of Africa, observes, That they are considered as a people to be robbed and spoiled, with impunity. Every art is employed to deceive and wrong them. And he who has most address, in this way, has most to boast of.

Not an article, that is capable of diminution or adulteration, is delivered genuine or entire. The spirits are lowered by water. False heads are put into the kegs that contain the gun-powder ; so that, though the keg appears large, there is no more powder in it, than in a much smaller. The linen and cotton cloths are opened, and two or three yards, according to the length of the piece, cut off, not from the end, but out of the middle, where it is not so readily noticed.

The Natives are cheated in the number, weight, measure, or quality, of what they purchase, in every possible way. And, by habit and emulation, a marvellous dexterity is acquired in these practices. And thus the Natives, in their turn, in proportion to their commerce with the Europeans, and (I am sorry to add) particularly with the English, become jealous, insidious, and revengeful.

They know with whom they deal, and are accordingly prepared ; — though they can trust some ships and boats, which have treated them with punctuality, and may be trusted by them. A quarrel, sometimes, furnishes pretext for detaining, and carrying away, one or more of the Natives, which is retaliated, if practicable, upon the next boat that comes to the place from the same port ; for so far their vindictive temper is restrained by their ideas of justice, that they will not often revenge an injury received from a Liverpool Ship, upon one belonging to Bristol or London.

They will, usually, wait with patience the arrival of one, which they suppose by her sailing from the same place, has some connection with that which used them ill ; and they are so quick at distinguishing our little local differences of language and customs in a ship, that before they have been in a ship five minutes, and often before they come on board, they know with certainty whether she be from Bristol, Liverpool, or London.

Retaliation on their parts furnishes a plea for reprisal on ours. Thus, in one place or another, trade is often suspended, all intercourse cut off, and things are in a state of war, till necessity, either on the ship's part, or on theirs, produces overtures of a peace, and dictates the price, which the offending party must pay for it. But it is a warlike peace. We trade under arms ; and they are furnished with long knives.

For, with few exceptions, the English and the Africans, reciprocally, consider each other as consummate villains, who are always watching opportunities to do mischief. In short, we have, I fear too deservedly, a very unfavourable character upon the coast. When I have charged a Black with unfairness and dishonesty, he has answered, if able to clear himself, with an air of disdain, "What! do you think " I am a white man?"

You

You who, in this land of liberty, continue deliberately to persist in so iniquitous a traffic; who even purchase, with no inconsiderable bribes, the power to be less cautiously treacherous on the coast of Africa; who make yourselves accountable for all the blood which is shed by the ministers of your designs; say--Do you never commune with your own hearts? Do you never *suspect* the wickedness of your conduct? And does conscience † indeed never warn you to stop the course of the foul current through which your riches flow?

For the SLAVE TRADE there is no remedy short of abolition: but for the SLAVERY in the West-Indies, much may be done by the exertions of Individuals in concurrence with the wisdom of Parliament. The first effort for reform must be made at home; must originate, as it will, with most propriety, in the House of Commons; where the subject can best be investigated with the accuracy which it deserves.

West-India Gentlemen of fortune and consequence have smarted under the reproach of tyranny over their Slaves; and in their zeal to repel so severe a charge, they have insisted with much earnestness on the humanity of their own conduct as individuals: strictness of discipline, but nothing more, they have maintained to be necessary; and for the rest, they have arraigned the rigorous customs of their country, and the want of protecting laws. The public has had the candor to give credit to their words, and to suspend for a time its final opinion on the ill treatment of Negroe Slaves: but more accurate enquiries have furnished undeniable proofs, that the oppressive destruction of Slavery still exists, and that the necessity of a SLAVE TRADE is still openly asserted. It may be that as things are now situated, Remedy, though not Relief, is out of the power of individuals. Let then the odium fall, as great part of it may with perfect justice, on the Legi-

† I know (says an apparently well informed writer) many West Indians, who are most exemplary humane, and for the sake of humanity I also say, that I knew many years ago one of the ablest and best informed men, and who was as worthy as he was well informed, who had such an abhorrence of the Slave-Trade, that he rejected, though a Merchant, the offer of having Guinea, Cargoes consigned to him, declaring that a peaceful conscience on a death bed was, in his estimation, superior to all the riches this world could offer.

flation of both countries; FOR THE ARGUMENT FROM RECORDED LAWS CANNOT BE DONE AWAY. Be it that Gentlemen of the West Indies do not encourage Cruelty--Will they stop here? Does society require nothing more at their hands? Will they refuse to assist in removing the causes of evils, of the existence of which they are but too sensible? Do they wish things to remain in their present dreadful situation? Or will they suffer private considerations, and local prejudices, to obstruct endeavours which profess to regulate, rather than abolish their authority over slaves?

You have now, Gentlemen, or soon will have, many of you, an opportunity of manifesting the sincerity of your conduct, as members of the British Senate, or of the Legislature of the Colonies: in these assemblies you may be supposed to have influence from your knowledge and experience--Throw this influence into the scale of humanity and sound policy--Assist in your public capacity to restrain that abuse of power, which, in your private one, you pretend not to justify--Join in putting an end to that scandalous waste of human life, in which, both as Men and as Christians, you scorn the bare imputation of being concerned: You will thus be consistent in all your conduct; you will thus justify the public candor which has given credit to your declarations.

By some prudent and energetic measures much good may be done without the apprehension of bad consequences. The consumption of the islands cannot be affected by any change which diminishes not the number of Negroes there; and so long as goods must be supplied from the home market, it surely matters not whether they be for the use of native Creoles, or of imported Africans. But the produce of the Islands will be materially increased by the greater ability to labour which good treatment will bestow; and the revenue also will be benefited by the consequence of those more active exertions which merely some increase of allowance in food, in cloaths, and in rest, will occasion. To * encouragements such as these it will be the interest

* The following statement is of importance, as it shews very accurately the proportion which the produce of a sugar plantation bears to the number of Slaves employed upon it, with and without oppression of them:—Negroes breed best, whose labour is least or easiest. Thus the domestic Negroes have more children in proportion than those

as well as the duty of every planter to give attention---their good effects will not long be unobserved--change of climate will then no more weaken, grief will no more consume, cruelty will no more destroy the native Creoles in such abundance; nor will despair be any longer tempted to raise the arm of the Imported African against his master's life or against his own. The personal security of Slaves will thus increase with their increasing value: and the very necessity of supplies by importation will cease with the power of procuring them.

None, but those who mean to abuse their authority, can reasonably object to wholesome regulations and legal restraints. If therefore it appear, as it certainly does, that this abuse of power is so far general in the West-Indies, as to occasion the vast loss of lives which is now replaced by the Slave Trade--whatever restraints can preserve those lives will, besides the advantages already enumerated, more than pay any additional expense in food and raiment, by removing the † heavy charge of newly purchased Africans, and the subsequent risque of losing them in the seasoning.

It is asserted, on good authority, that the Negroes, at present in the Islands, if they be properly treated, and if their work be

those on pennis, and the latter than those who are employed on sugar plantations. If the number of hogsheads annually made from any estate, exceeds or even equals the whole aggregate of Negroes employed upon it, but few children will be brought up on such estate. But when the proportion of the annual produce is about half a hoghead for every Negroe, there they will in all likelihood increase very rapidly; and not much less so where the ratio is of two hogheads to every three Negroes, which may be called a good mean proportion. Thus an estate which makes, *communibus annis*, 200 hogheads, ought to muster on its list 300 Negroes; and if it makes 300 hogheads, it ought to have 450 Negroes. An estate so handed, may not only, *ceteris paribus*, save the expense of buying recruits, but may every year afford some addition to the first number.—In addition to this important statement by Mr. Long, I am authorised to say, that a Gentleman some time since directed his Overseer to make one-fifth less of sugar than formerly, and this on purpose to relieve his Slaves: the event fully justified the experiment—by repaying him for his indulgence, and soon removing the necessity for fresh purchases.

† The price of Negroes is advanced within these twenty years near 140 per cent. and besides this, every purchaser of a newly imported Negroe is, in Jamaica at least, burthened with three taxes: the first, on importation; the second, the current impost of the year, either for deficiency or poll; the third, the parochial; all which, together, raise the price of every Negroe purchased two pounds five shillings a head for the first year—and the number of Negroes lost in the seasoning is very considerable indeed—not much short of a fifth of the whole annual Importation.

judi--

judiciously allotted, are sufficient for the culture of all the Colonies ; and it need not be proved a second time, that with trifling encouragement, all Negroes will increase their own numbers, and thus render the Slave Trade useless for this purpose †. The accidents of War have already suggested the benevolent and just Idea---Should the blessings of Peace then be made only renewals of Cruelty ? May not rather the wisdom of the mother country improve the hint, and secure the advantages by positive statutes ?

Those who best understand the history of West-Indian police, have laid it down as a general maxim---That so long as Negroes are severable from the land by the joint operation of an English Act of Parliament, and the priority law in Jamaica, or by laws of similar import in other islands, every Colony will be retarded in its improvement. It has been proposed, as a remedy for these legal defects, that Slaves be affixed to the soil ; that bonds and simple contracts should take their forfeitures from the produce of Negroes' labour, rather than from the sale of their persons ; and in case of this being insufficient, that the whole plantation should be sold *collectively* ; or that debtors' estates should be assigned in trust for their creditors :—"It matters not how often West-Indian estates change hands, *provided the Negroes pass with the land.*" Private credit may thus be secured without bloodshed ; Plantations will thus be preserved from desertion and from ruin.

† That the State of the Slave-Trade was considerably impeded by the American War, appears from the following statement of the Trade from Liverpool only.

During the six Years preceding 1777, there were vessels fitted out for between 20, and 30,000 Negroes every year—but in 1777, 1778, 1779, and 1780, there were but few vessels fitted out, and those in one year for 3000 Negroes only ; in any one of the others they barely amounted to 9000—since the period of 1780, however, the trade has recovered its briskness, and even exceeded, not in the number of vessels indeed, but in their tonnage perhaps, for the number of Negroes exported have, in every year since but one, exceeded 30,000. Moreover, the scarcity of newly imported Slaves during the period of the war, was productive neither of that slaughter of the prisoners in Africa, nor of that distress in the Islands, which interested people have alleged to be the necessary consequence of the cessation of the Slave Trade. The only effect which, according to the best information, it produced was, that in Africa it reduced the black traders to poverty, and obliged them in common with their countrymen, to support themselves by planting yams, &c. for their subsistence : and in the islands it forced the planters to adopt a system of humanity towards the women and children at least, and in some degree towards the men, which, it should seem, has not been generally persevered in, since the trade has revived on the peace ; yet in almost every instance, where population has been thus encouraged for a continuance, the necessity for fresh purchases of newly imported Africans has been found unnecessary.

Would

Would to Heaven that the STAIN which the savage ordinance of Barbadoes has stamped on the spirit of Colonial Legislation, could be for ever blotted from the page of history.

When it shall please the Legislative power of the mother country, to lay the axe to the root of tyranny, by restoring Negroes to the rights of men; by protecting them from licensed cruelty, and abolishing the unnatural traffic in the human species---it will then become the duty of the Colonies to give weight and effect to such noble beginnings. We may then see with pleasure, the joint efforts of policy and humanity tending to fix the mutual confidence of both countries on the basis of good laws, of well regulated protection, and of just advantages. We shall then be satisfied that too exclusive an attention to the security of private credit has led to evil consequences; and that it has been purchased at too dear a rate by the blood of millions of mankind. The happy contrast of a wiser and more liberal policy will then prove most decidedly the injustice of that partial system which has been suffered so long to secure the purse at the expense of the life of man; which has put him out of the protection of the laws, and degraded him from his rank in the creation; which, in short, by thus subjecting him to a despotism that has tyrannized without controul over the mind as well as the body, has, to the common instances of indiscriminate cruelty towards Negroes, added THAT MOST AUDACIOUS ONE OF JUSTIFYING THEIR BEING WITHHELD FROM THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRISTIANITY, AND THE PRACTICE OF ITS DUTIES.

In fine, Sir, the HONOUR and the INTEREST of the British Nation is concerned in this enquiry: the HONOUR in putting an end to that oppression and bloodshed which now shelters itself under legal Authority—the INTEREST, in preserving the lives also of numbers of English sailors; and in extending to every article of the produce of Africa, * THAT ENCOURAGEMENT

* The Gold Trade at Annamaboe has fallen in proportion to the extravagant rise in the price of Slaves there—and so has other branches of commerce in other parts of Africa.

The Slave-Trade may be considered in two points of view, as it supplies the British West-India Islands, and as it supplies the French and Spanish—in the former of these cases it affects the revenue of this country only mediately, through the produce of the islands—in the latter it has no concern with it, except in the custom duties, &c. of the export goods which are carried to Africa—whether if this Slave-Trade were abolished,

WHICH HAS HITHERTO BEEN CONFINED TO THE SLAVE
TRADE.

AFRICANUS.

ed, and a freer and more amicable intercourse opened with the nations of Africa, there would not be a greater and more various exportation of English goods to that continent, is a consideration well worthy the investigation of parliament. According to Lord Sheffield, in his observations on the commerce of the American States, there were imported into the British West-Indian islands 23,743 Negroes in the year 1773—by a statement which I have received, drawn up from Liverpool, there were fitted out from that port only, in that same year, 104 vessels for 27,700 Negroes. Put the whole exportation therefore from Africa, about that period, by Great Britain, and the islands which belong to her, only at 50,000, which is a very moderate average, and these consequences will follow—either that the loss of Negroes is greater than is generally suspected, or that the impolitic system of supplying the French and Spaniards with slaves is more extensive than has been imagined.—“If all that are taken on board the ships were to survive the voyage, (says a well-experienced writer) and to be landed in good order, possibly the English, French, and Dutch Islands and colonies, would soon be overstocked, and fewer ships would sail to the coast. But a large abatement must be made for mortality.—I believe nearly one-half of the slaves on board have sometimes died; and that the loss of a third part in these circumstances is not unusual. I believe, upon an average, between the more healthy and the more sickly voyages, and including all contingencies, one-fourth of the whole may be allowed to the article of mortality, that is, if the English annually purchase 60,000 slaves upon the whole extent of the coast, the annual loss of lives cannot be much less than 150,00.”

Thoughts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade, by J. Newton, p. 36.

In short, it may be asserted with truth, and it is capable of being proved, that the Slave Trade destroys more sailors in one year, than all the trades of Great Britain put together in two.